

PS 1919
.H356
Copy 1

DOM ARROWS

BY
FAY HEMPSTEAD.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Class. Copyright No.

Shelf. 4356

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





RANDOM ARROWS.

BY
FAY HEMPSTEAD.

"I cannot make the matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain."
THE TWO VOICES.



PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1878.

PS 1919

, H 356

Copyright, 1878, by FAY HEMPSTEAD.

“Se fortuna mi tormenta, il sperato mi contenta.”

SECOND PART KING HENRY IV., ACT II.

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, 1878.

DEDICATION.

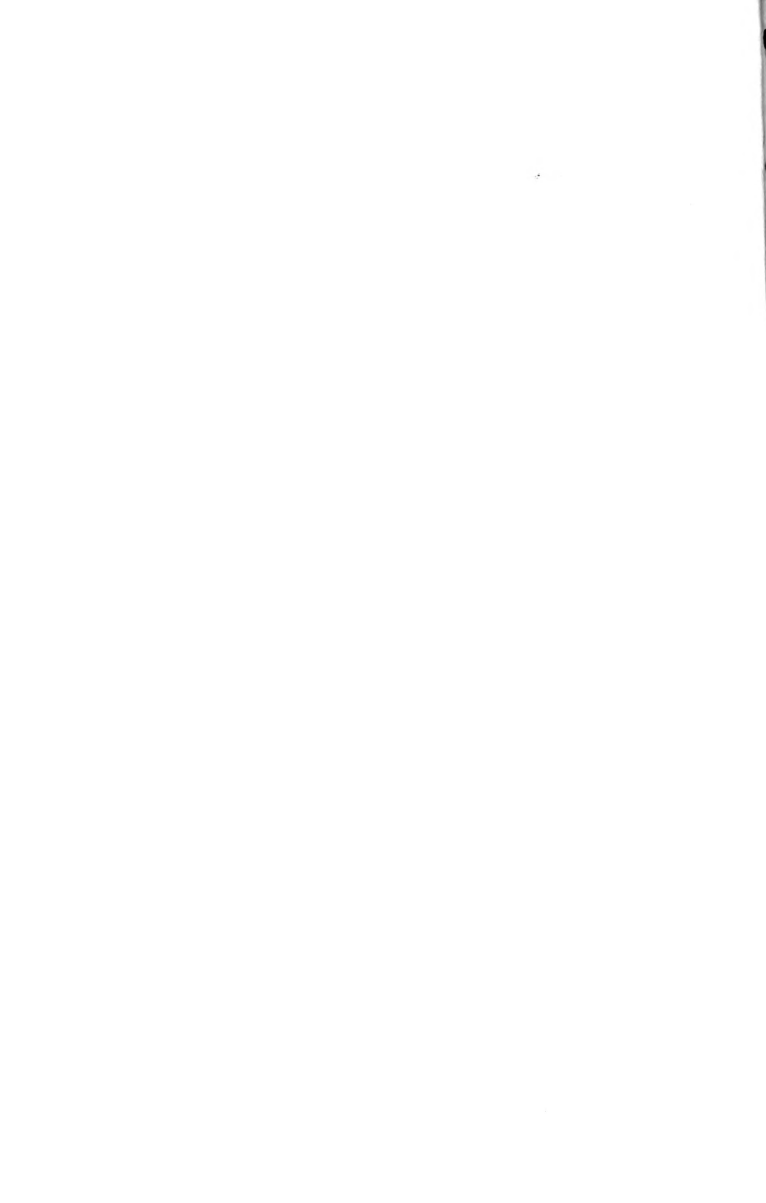
Look down from off thy shining height,
Oh dwellers in the shadow land!
Look from thy universe of light;
And if that spirits understand
What comes to those they leave behind,—
The spirit-strife, the toil of mind,—
Receive a tribute to thy worth,
Oh parents of my earthly race!
Ye loved to whom I owe my birth,
And what of Art my hand can trace.
To ye, with tears, I dedicate
These lays. But all inadequate
This simple strain of mine to sing
What tender care and love ye gave;
How constant ye my mind did bring
My charge to keep, my soul to save.
Oh, how can living man repay
The love of parents passed away?

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION	4
TANTALUS	9
DOMBEY'S DREAM	11
REMEMBER, LOVE	13
SONNET	14
MEMORY'S ISLES	15
THE STANDARD-BEARER	16
ESTENOZA	17
STREWING THE GRAVES	19
TO MAY C——.	22
HAS IT COME, OR IS IT COMING?	23
APOSTROPHE TO THE YEAR	25
THE SEARCH OF DIOGENES—AN EPIGRAM	27
RETURNING	27
THE HUNDRED YEARS	28
MY LOVE AND I	33
ALECTA	34
FROM A NEW-YEAR CAROL	59
FROM THE SAME: "WHAT ART THOU, YEAR?"	62
MARGARET MAIN	64
THE WRANGLER	71
HYMN	80
A CHRISTENING TOKEN	81
MOUNT HOLLY	83
MOUNTAIN MEADOWS	84
DANGER	86
"WE SAT BESIDE THE RUSHES"	88
THE POET'S SONG	89

	PAGE
SIN NO MORE	90
TO JOHN G. WHITTIER	92
THE CHRISTMAS GIFT	94
THE DEPARTED YEAR	98
WINTER-GLIMPSES	99
O-NI-HAH-KET	104
THE DROUGHT	114
THE SUMMER RAIN	115
THE RICHEST PRINCE	115
THE COUNSELLOR'S TALE	117
NOTES	129

RANDOM ARROWS.



RANDOM ARROWS.

TANTALUS.

(A little bird flew into the great dining-hall of the Grand Union Hotel, at Saratoga, and took refuge in the heavy upholstery of the upper part of the windows; and although the guests and servants were particular to leave doors and windows open for its escape, it would not descend, but after fluttering hopelessly amid the forest of the chandeliers for six days, it was picked up from the floor dead. It had starved, while the guests were feasting at the tables below. Upon the incident the following poem was written.)

A TINY songster, borne on flitting wing,
Did, headlong flying, through a window spring.

It was the window of a dining-hall;
Though heavy-curtained 'gainst the sunlight's fall.

Here, strongly prisoned, did it restless flee
'Mid vaulted arches, seeking to be free.

Its flight contriving held in upper air,
Did it poise lower—see, escape was there!

For men in pity freedom's pathway show,
And door and window wide and open throw.

There hourly trooping came a hungry throng,
As waves succeeding ocean's shores along.

There gleaming tables, set with dainty meat
And countless viands, spread beneath its feet.

In large profusion lay the goodly cheer,
The broad world's bounty gathered far and near.

But the poor songster, faint, with drooping plume,
Felt Famine's anguish hurrying on his doom ;

^And feebly fluttering o'er the plenty spread,
Fell starved and dying for a crust of bread !

So to the human, as the bird, this is ;
Man—King of Being—finds such fate is his.

In this world's fashion, some, with hungry eye,
View others' splendor ; and, viewing, meanly die.

See rich abundance heaped on every hand,
And they so needy : wherefore are they banned ?

Lo ! here is beauty seen on every side ;
For us it shines not : such has Fate denied.

Soft eyes, bright faces, lips of blossom tint,
To heated Fancy lingering kisses hint.

Cheeks dyed with crimson ; forms in motion free ;
Near, near,—but, dreamer, far, far from thee !

So Moses, viewing, saw from Pisgah's height
The Land of Promise ; yet died with but the sight.

Thus hedged with plenty are we oft restrained,
And faint with, near us, fulness unattained.

1875.

DOMBEY'S DREAM.

In clouds that hover darkly o'er the mind
Too often only poisoned dew we find.
Who seeks seclusion, hid from human sight,
Grows like the plant excluded from the light.

Why hidden thus in mute and sombre walls,
In solitude, where even breathing falls
With starting echoes, sits a stern old man,
With crouching form, and chin upon his hand?
Why thus forbid the gleaming sunlight come,
To break the reign of darkness and of gloom?
Nor cheerfulness within, to drive away
The double problem of a night in day.
Can from such spot, with its unbroken calm,
Spring up for grief a gently-healing balm?
What could we be if round our joyous world
Naught else but Night's black pinions had been furled?
What if the light of moon, of sun, or star,
Had not been sent to drive the dark afar?
Can not association oft incline
The yielding soul away from its design?

Are we not drawn by things that us surround,
Till little of our native self is found ?
'Tis from the scenes amid which we are placed
That deep effects are on our being traced.
So, thus, repeated solitude and gloom
Had made the man in manner like his room.
Could wealth have purchased solace from all care ;
Could lofty pride have put to flight despair ;
Could frigid manners happiness supply,
Or haughty mien have silenced misery's cry,
Then might he have revelled deep in bliss.
The world and nature gave him all of this.
Yet these were worthless armor to repel
The pangs of thoughts, that rose like ghosts from Hell :
Of thoughts that flitted swiftly through his brain,
That would not cease, but came and came again.

“ 'Tis thus that all has mocked me, and despised
The care I took with what I chiefly prized !
My stately mansion fails to win me peace ;
My grand display yet brings me no release
From grief and woe. Yea, much I strove to gain
A boundless wealth in labor, toil, and pain,—
Yea, heaped it up ! Yet to my boy-child's cry
Of 'What is money ?' I cannot reply.
I know 'tis much ; that 'tis a moving power.
But 'tis not all, no more than is the hour
The day complete. And, then, how have I spurned
The love for me that in my daughter burned !
What fiendish impulse was it made me chill
Her soft advances—all her ardor kill ?
Why have I sorrowed her with cold neglect,
As one that lived far down beneath respect ?

Oh, Florence, daughter ! could your gentle heart
Bear all these ills and not be torn apart ?
And *she*—the one to whom I gave my name—
What words have I in which to cry the shame
That she has brought upon my lofty pride,
When scandal's tongue shall scatter far and wide
How she has fled ? Oh, God, thou God of Night !
Hast thou no blast to sweep from human sight
So woe-engulfed a wretch as I who pray ?
But no ! I would be spared, if but a day :
Be spared to do at least one gentle thing,—
To seek my child and on her bosom fling
My erring head, and pray her to forgive,
O'erlook the miseries that I've made her live,
That o'er my faults oblivion she may cast,
And let my future recompense my past."

Oh, blessed hope that decks the lives of men !
'Tis ne'er too late from evil ways to bend.
And one sincere good act may much repair,
In cleansing spots of evil gathered there.

REMEMBER, LOVE.

A SONG.

WHEN moonbeams glance their silvery light
Across the lake and river,
It brings me back that tender night
When last we sat together.

Thy star-like eyes gazed into mine,
And spake as tongue can never ;
So on me let their brightness shine,
Remember, love, forever !

Not oft we spake, for well we knew
That, on the coming morrow,
Across our sky of love so true
Would pass a cloud of sorrow.
It came, but cannot always be ;
Dark must give place to brighter.
Then will our hearts, once light and free,
Remember, love, be lighter !

Few rays of sunlight round me shine,
The path is dark before me ;
But let me know thy love is mine,
I care not what comes o'er me.
This heart within me burns the same,
Years have not dimmed its fervor ;
And thus for thee will live its flame,
Remember, love, forever !

SONNET.

THINE eyes are wells of tender haze,
Whene'er thy glance accords to mine :
And as I sit and longing gaze,
My soul goes through them into thine.
So deep and blue they seem to be,
That I into their glory glide

Down depths as soundless as the sea ;
By force resistless as the tide.
O cruel eyes, to lead me there,
And then to leave me cast away !
Look kindly down on my despair,
And lift me to thy perfect day.

MEMORY'S ISLES.

ARE there not verdant places in feeling
Which never can wither away,
Though our feet have gone far on our journey,
Though our locks, once so bright, are now gray ;
And their beauty and bloom find never a tomb
Till memory gives over her sway ?

Have you not seen the lily of morning
With a gossamer film o'er it spread,
When the dew-pearls upon it have clustered,
And hang from each delicate thread ?
'Tis a flower as before ; its loveliness more ;
And sweetly its perfume is shed.

So Time weaves a web to our vision,
Over scenes of delight in the past ;
And tear-drops upon it may gather,
But yet it's the same scene at last.
And down Time's swift river though float we forever,
Their memories will cling to us fast.

Such is often the lone consolation
That steals o'er me when sorrow descends.
The form of the pleasure may vanish,
But the likeness my being attends.
And at memory's shrine will it ever be mine
Till my life with eternity blends.

THE STANDARD-BEARER.

CHEERILY, cheerily, rose the morn.
Into the field the standard-bearer
Headed the line with banner and horn.
Oh, will he come back when the day is done?

Drearily, drearily, from the dawn,
She watched and wept, and oft repeated:
"Alas! the light of my life is gone!
Oh, will he come back when the day is done?"

Steadily, steadily, wore away
The shock and smoke and clash of battle.
With a shot in his breast the soldier lay,
And he never came back when the day was done.
1875.

ESTENOZA.

DRAW near and see the clay that dressed
A gift recalled unto the Giver :
A heart at rest in a stout, brave breast ;
Once swelling high, now stilled forever.

Long time the angry sea-wave's peak
Had tossed him in its restless bounding ;
And there with shriek, and ravening beak,
Came swooping gulls, his death-note sounding.

Lashed firm and fast, by hempen band,
To spars that oft their bearing shifted ;
And near at hand there lay the land,
But ever on and on he drifted.

Long days the sun's blaze on him burst,
Borne on by wind and wave that passed him ;
With hunger cursed, and maddening thirst,
Ashore the sea's long roll had cast him.

Too faint for life's reviving play,
With staggering thought of one he cherished,
He gasping lay till evening gray,
And in the twilight meanly perished.

And one star came in the evening air,
And stood o'er where the dead was lying.
That star, so fair, had seen him swear
His love should fade but with his dying ;

How here and there for wealth he hied,
Strong in his faith and high endeavor ;
Seen ill betide whate'er he tried,
And sad mischance beset him ever ;

Had seen him homeward turn his eyes,
From far away in ocean sailing ;
The storm arise, under blackening skies,
And his ship go down in the wind's loud wailing ;

And last had seen his oath fulfilled.
The gift returned unto the Giver,
His stout heart chilled, and ever stilled,
But life and love went out together.

She stands upon the swelling height
As night-winds gather on the river,
And still and bright, in the evening light,
One star shines out with shimmering quiver.

“Oh, deadly star in yon blue sky,
Why did thy light e'er fall upon me?
Did I but fly thy glittering eye
His burning words had never won me.

“He sware his love thy life received,
And thou and it should fade together ;
And I, deceived, his love believed
Would, with thy light, shine on forever.

“Lo, *thou* still shinest in thy sphere,
But *he* sends back to me no token !
And now 'tis near a weary year
He breaks the faith his soul hath spoken.

“Oh, silver star, ye shine so clear !
Oh, load of life, ye wax so dreary !
Why should I fear to change me here
For the low bed that waits the weary ?

“Oh, darkness, close my sorrow keep !
Oh, grave, with endless calm relieve me !
Thou blessed deep, guard well my sleep,
And in thy winding arms receive me !”

The waves dash to the cliff-rock's site,
Then close with momentary shiver.
And still and bright, in the evening light,
Yon star shines on with shimmering quiver.
1875.

STREWING THE GRAVES.

MEMORIAL DAY.

COME rich in flowers, of bud and bloom, that freshen
green and gay ;
Twine round the wreath and bright festoon, and trim
the sweet bouquet.

May heaven's calm and quiet light to-day be on the
land,
And all, from cot to courtly hall, assist with willing
hand;
And we'll approach with measured tread where lie our
fallen braves,
To strew the tokens of our love upon their humble
graves.

What holier day doth dawn within the circle of the
year
Than this that bids us deck the sod of those we cher-
ished here?
In each memento we have kept, their presence to
recall,—
The rusty musket in the rack, the sabre on the wall,—
They live again, to tell the love they spent in fatal
field.
And greater love hath none than this: his life to freely
yield.

Oh, mother! on thy darkened hearth a lengthened
shadow lies.
The smile from off a face has gone, a light from out
the eyes.
On distant hills the battle-cloud hung mingled with
the dark;
And there a manly soldier lay, but lying cold and
stark.
He sleeping waits the final trump, amid the nameless
dead;
But, mother, here are many such. Go deck their lowly
bed.

Oh, maid ! this modest heaving mound may hold some
fair-haired boy :

Some mother's main delight and pride ; some loving
father's joy.

'Tis meet that you should render here the simple tribute
due ;

Some sister far away may make a like return to you,—

Toward one *you* loved, who takes his rest amid the
mouldering brave,

When she, with fresh and tender flowers, draws near
and strews his grave.

They have no columns highly wrought, affection's tale
to tell :

No granite shaft nor marble slab, to teach us how they
fell.

But let this custom be observed, by loving hearts begun,

And for successive ages hence descend from sire to son.

Then far beyond the marble's life 'twill honor do our
braves,

When others, rich in fair young flowers, draw nigh and
strew their graves.

TO MAY C——.

It is said there's an isle in the river of Time,
That is known as "the Long Ago."
All gorgeous with verdure of beauty sublime,
Where Memory's harp rings a musical chime,
As the swift years onward flow.

As that river I travel, that island I see
From the Present begins to arise.
On its verge joyous faces and fair ones there be,
With a warm ready welcome extended to me,
And these the isle's flowers comprise.

For they give it a halo of happiness pure ;
They tinge it a delicate hue ;
They deck it with joys that will ever endure.
Through the changes—aye, sorrows—that life brings as
sure
As the night brings the heaven's soft dew.

And I'm sure that as onward the rolling years glide
To their graves in Eternity's sea,
That though here and there glimmer dim specks on the
tide,
They'll be naught when I count them, in beauty, beside
What these moments will look like to me.

HAS IT COME, OR IS IT COMING?

"Our lives are full of lost opportunities."—ECHECRATES.

I.

I've learned of life a lesson that the great of old have
taught.
I've learned that name and favor by toil alone are
bought.
That it is not man's of sudden, by a swift-directed
blow,
To achieve a great endeavor, but by patient toil and
slow.

II.

Yet I've learned that there are moments in the restless
tide of Time
That open to the seeker the path o'er which to climb
To Triumph; but like sunset, as it gilds the dying
day,
They linger but a moment, then forever fade away.

III.

As I sit within my chamber now, to ponder on the
morrow,
This lesson flits before me, like a mocking ghost of
sorrow.

It banishes my pleasant dreams, my power to smile
 benumbing,
As it asks, in taunting whispers, "Has it come, or is
 it coming?"

IV.

Has it come, or is it coming? 'Tis a solemn thing to
 think
That mischance has seized upon us as we stood at
 Fortune's brink;
That the future spread before us may ne'er again
 restore
What the past has offered to us; but we lost it ever-
 more.

V.

Has the time forever vanished when I might have won
 esteem,
And gathered for my memory the light of glory's
 beam,—
When my name would long be treasured for the deeds
 that I had done?
Has that time gone—forever gone—or is it yet to
 come?

VI.

The world that spreads around me has much of sadness
 now.
There are clouds upon my pathway, there are wrinkles
 on my brow.
I *might* have made them brighter, had I only different
 done.
But I'm not the lone example that this truth has
 dawned upon.

VII.

There are hearts we might have softened, that have
steeled against us grown ;
There are joys we might have tasted, but whose ab-
sence we bemoan.
Time was when we could pluck them, and yet we did
refrain.
Has that time gone—forever gone—or will it come
again ?

VIII.

Alas ! through this world we wander, in a purblind
manner quite,
And we fail to seize those chances that are plainest to
the sight.
Thus we travel, ever onward, till the Reaper reaps
us in,
And the grave-clods falling on us cover—what we
might have been.

1872.

APOSTROPHE TO THE YEAR.

FAREWELL, old year ! And yet I bid thee stay
One moment with me, ere thou speed'st away ;
One instant, while upon thy fading face
I cast one glance, thy dead events to trace.
What see I there ? As on some placid lake
Doth sunshine, poured through boughs o'erhanging,
make

A checker-work of light and shadow, so
Do joy and sorrow o'er thy surface flow.
Where youthful Hope in brightness lent its smile,
Its cheer is checked by contravening wile.
Where Fancy once her fairy palace built,
There looms up now the sombre ghost of guilt ;
And evil deeds, grim skeletons of sin,
Now haunt the place which once hath stainless
 been.

And you, ye withered laurels on my brow,
How few in number and how dead ye now !
How different ye from expectation's glow !
Alas ! alas ! that ye should fall so low.
What cruel cheats, oh dying year, were thine !
What rosy hope, what fervent love was mine !
What bitter pangs thy rolling months have brought !
What thorns they gave for roses that I sought !
And how couldst thou but dark and dreary shine,
If these alone, oh passing year, were thine ?

But yet thou wert not always doleful. No,
Much was joy, however much was woe.
Thou often o'er my solitude didst send
The cheerful face of many a valued friend ;
And often thou didst bid me banish care,
To seek amusement of the lovely fair ;
Amid the dance's circle proudly gay,
How often have I whirled the hours away !
Cease, cease, my song ! In verse so low of wing,
I dare not seek the pleasing theme to sing.
A world for thought lies in that glance I gave.
Go, teeming graveyard ! fall into thy grave.

Then speed thee, New Year ! May we live to see
Thy gliding hours on golden pinions flee,
Thy days be days of joy and gladness ere
Old Time shall bid thee too to disappear !
So weave thy woof that with it ye may bring,
In place of thorns, the tender flowers of spring ;
Bid War, with all its train of horrors, cease ;
Bid Hate be Love, and Discord yield to Peace ;
Bid Plenty sow her sweets with lavish hand,
And reap full harvests from a bounteous land !
Do these, oh year, and when thou too shalt fade,
My humble harp shall mourn o'er thy decade.

EPIGRAM.

IN search, with light in lantern pent,
Diogenes his moments spent.
To find an honest man he went,
But tired of the experiment.

RETURNING.

AYE, the flowers do fade as the Winter comes round,
And mingle their leaves with the dust of the ground.
But see how we welcome their coming in spring !
How sweeter than ever's the fragrance they bring !

The twinkling eyes of the stars fade away
Before the swift march of the on-coming day ;
But yet, when they stud the dark mantle of night,
They shine all the brighter for losing their light.

So absence but serveth the surer to prove
The strength and endurance that lieth in love ;
When the void and the aching of parting are past,
Then the heart finds reward for its waiting at last.

THE HUNDRED YEARS.

1876.

I.

WAS I born too late for rhyme,
Too late for song, or roundelay,
To sing my Nation's worth, when Time
Has rolled her hundred years away ?
These hundred years I come behind
Have seen of song the garnered leaves,
And I am left odd stalks to bind,
Like her who gleaned among the sheaves.

II.

And though I turn to right, to left,
To gather in the boundless field,
A foot is stamped, a print is cleft,
And other hands have reaped the yield.

Yet let me tune my pigmy pipe
To swell the notes of glad acclaim,
That greet a land in glory ripe,
And sounding to the trump of fame.

III.

Born in clouds : of parents sprung
With hearts as stout as oaken wood,
Fair Hope around her cradle clung,
And Faith and Freedom sponsors stood.
And then her dread baptism comes ;
Not water drawn from earth-born rill,
But muskets' flash and jarring drums,
And blood and death on every hill !

IV.

Oh, the long, unequal fray,—
The weary strain of trust and prayer !
What wonder trembling hearts gave way,
And pale lips quivered with despair !
Oh, dawn of day ! when will ye light
To eyes that watched and never ceased ;
As they who lose their way at night
Look long for light to gild the East ?

V.

With Freedom's altar-fires in sight,
Enkindled with the breath she drew,
She vanquished ; and, a child of light,
Uprose, and eagle-soaring flew.
Ah, well if fires like that still blaze !
But Truth and Candor bid me sing

That often, in these latter days,
Hath Freedom gone a visiting.

VI.

We who daily feel the breeze,
The light of sun we love so well,
Yet love them less than him who sees,
Imprisoned, from a dungeon-cell.
We, long enjoying Freedom's prime,
Forget the good the ages bring.
A hundred years is ample time
To learn and to unlearn a thing.

VII.

But Progress here hath builded towers,
And we have thrived, and grown, and filled.
This restless Saxon blood of ours
Was never made to slumber chilled.
The East no longer from the West
By plain, or lake, or hill divides ;
Through bands of steel are they compressed,
And forth the Car of Triumph rides.

VIII.

Electric thought along the wires
That lie beneath the sea is sent ;
The wilderness grows glittering spires,
And nulled is earth's high battlement.
The stream is bridged, the rock is squared ;
Great cities swelled, and towns have grown ;
And forests fled, and mines are bared.
All these and else the age hath shown.

IX.

And what will other hundred years
Of time to come, in coming, bring?
Bring they only Winter tears?
Bring they even flowers of Spring?
Bring Advance, as we have seen,
In fourfold measure weighted down?
For we are on the brink I ween,
And they shall reap where we have sown.

X.

Shall we see the cunning brain
Rule the air as earth and sea,
Soothe the snow, or guide the rain,
By some discovered subtlety?
Shall we see the dumb to sing;
The deaf to hear; the halt to go;
Machines for doing everything,
Except what mind and body do?

XI.

God wot! There is no backward slide
From where we stand to dark degree;
For knowledge ebbs not as the tide,
Nor wingéd is, like wealth we see.
But it vexes not my spirit sore.
By that day we may never know;
And generations, three or more,
May press the ground we lie below.

XII.

When Xerxes saw the sun arise
Above his many-millioned spears,

He wept, with misty, swimming eyes,
To think that in a hundred years
Not one of all that countless host,
Of Persia's plains the flower and bloom,
But what should render up the ghost,
And silent lie within the tomb.

XIII.

But—cursed thought !—the sweep of trade
May grudge the room we occupy,
And damned Invention quit the spade
To char our bones: nor let them lie.
God grant to me, when ends my race
In kindly earth where I was born,
To wrap me in sufficient space
To wait the resurrection morn !

XIV.

And be that morn in hundred years
Or hundred ages yet to come,
Deep freighted with the hopes and fears
Of pulsing hearts that now are dumb ;
The eye of Faith sees, clear as sight,
Forth reaching to that shadowy land,
The crowns of light, the robes of white,
That round the throne of Mercy stand.

MY LOVE AND I.

I.

I STROLLED with my love when the day-blaze was ended,
And began the deep shadows of evening to fall,
To a dear quiet spot we had often attended,—
The stile near the fallow-field, close by the wall.

II.

There was naught to be heard save the locust's long
whirring,
The mocking-bird's warble in the alder close by,
The wind's gentle wings in the tree-leaves light
stirring;
But they were sweet sounds to my own love and I.

III.

I told to her then that old, olden story,
That often and over I'd told her before;
That fortune, and fame, life, liberty, glory,
Unshared in by her, were as sands by the shore.

IV.

Then her soft downy cheek against mine she rested;
Her lovely white arms around me were thrown.
She said,—and her eye of its truth manifested,—
“Whate'er fate befalls you, this heart is your own.”

V.

'Twas no news, but it was, oh, so sweet an assurance!—

It came like the breath of the holiest prayer—
That vow filled my heart with a lasting endurance.

'Twas a barque and a sail for life's ocean of care.

VI.

And oh, Heavenly Father, I implore thy kind spirit
To guide my faint footsteps along my rough way ;
That so I may prove that affection to merit,
And teach her to love me for ever and aye !

ALECTA.

I.

HERE, by this bank, a little will I rest ;
My fading strength is faint, and fainter growing.
Here will I lie and watch the ruddy west,
And the red monarch to his slumber going.

This first short walk in the odor-laden air,
Spiced with the breath from new hay-fields arisen,
Is turning from Death's very entry, where
I lay, but rose to break my sick-bed prison.

My limbs, so long unused to exercise,
Once good as the best, will bear me up no longer
Until I rest ; so low my vigor lies,
So scant fulfils my craving to be stronger.

Oh, for the abundant strength that once was mine !
Lost in the doings of a day of terror.
I digged the pit, and now, in youth's decline,
I lie and suck the gall of mine own error.

A short-lived error in mere lapse of time,
But long, long coursed in its dread entailing.
Yea, well I know that where my feet may climb,
That one wild act will follow never failing.

That though my tread should tend to lofty spot,
Or humbler lie by rock, or over meadow,
Some child, from that one dread mistake begot,
Will dog my footsteps like my proper shadow.

Dear Lord, we sin against thee, and thy grace
Is not withheld us ; yet we are forgiven.
We sin against ourselves, and lo, the trace
Lives through the longest life beneath the heaven !

Stamped as the clay, transformed to flinty rock,
That rose in Time's remotest designation,
Still bears the dintings of the iceberg's shock,
Impressed amid the early earth's formation.

If Error puts his ploughshare in our hearts,
And drops the seed behind him in the furrow,
His tilth remains, and nevermore departs,
And grain springs up from where the seeds did
burrow.

Oh, vain regret ! the knowledge that there lay
Within my reach a prize of wondrous kindness

I might have worn ; but, in an evil day,
I cast aside the treasure in my blindness.

For through a garden in a happy hour
I rambled, and a budding rose selected,
But, as I reached my hand to pluck the flower,
A poisonous asp a stinging wound inflicted.

For quick and hasty was the movement made ;
Unwary I, and not with circumspection,
Rushed headlong on where I should have delayed,
And thus the serpent, coiled, escaped detection.

Oh, the evil of these hasty minds !
Does truth lie in the first impulsive flaming ?
Then may we say the target marksman finds
His truest shot without the aid of aiming.

Better the slow, the long-continued strain
Of patient study to the subject lending,
Than quick to strike, impelled by heated brain,
At times to win, but more in ruin ending.

How many lives there are to mine allied,
Who fret and chafe at each imposed obstruction ;
Whose course some trifling fact has turned aside,
And purblind rush they to their own destruction !

The night draws on, and I must creep away
To that dull couch whereon my weakness binds me ;
Perhaps to lie and toss till nearly day,
While the blank blackness of the room confines me.

'Tis three days since Alecta has been there ;
But every day she sends some gracious token,
Or books, or flowers, some dish of dainty fare,
And thus the weary round of hours is broken.

Patience, dear love ! The hope that springs from thee
May win me back again my old position,
In strength renewed. In this low time for me
Thy love shall prove my worthiest physician.

II.

This thing of the memory puzzles us all ;
This reviving of visions long fled.
If a leaf do but flutter, a bird do but call,
If the scent of a flower upon us do fall,
Slight as the thing does it open the way
For a thought on a long-buried object to play,
And bid it arise from the dead.

It needs for me only to breathe of this air,
But to witness the evening decline,
When the scent of the newly-mown hay lying there
Calls up to my vision a scenery fair
Of the day that has been, when the sun in the sky
Beheld in his rounds not a happier than I,
For the promise she gave to be mine.

My love was a pearl of the feminine race.
In her stature sufficiently tall,
With fair yellow hair and a finely-turned face,
With a figure whose motion was exquisite grace,

And a lip and a cheek that together did vie
With the tint of the roses when summer is nigh ;
And a mischievous merriment hid in her eye,
More winning and lovely than all.

I had but to gaze on her beauty so fresh,
But to glance at her womanly air,
And oh ! for the weakness in bosoms of flesh,
I was snared as a captive in Love's silken mesh.
Captive and bound in the conjuror's toils ;
For Love is a conqueror quick at his spoils,
And he taketh his prey unaware.

Oh, lover, love once ! Let the Spirit Divine
Sway the heart as the winds do the main :
Aye, bathe in the light of it, drink it like wine ;
Drink deep of its lusciousness while it is thine.
Love once ! Let its forge-fires glow hissing and
bright,
Let it fill thy soul full of its warmth and its light,
Be the sun-flame of noonday, the moon-glare of night.
Love once ! It comes never again.

Ah, what shall declare between gladness and pain,
How a pale star of Hope would abide,
As I pleaded unceasing again and again
For the love that would make me the richest of men ;
Till I pressed her clear cheek growing ruby and warm,
Enzoned in the ring of her glorious arm,
When she promised herself as my bride.

Oh, the passionate thrill of that moment expressed
In the flood of the sudden surprise,

As I folded her close to my pulsating breast,
And kissed off the tears that her ardor confessed !
And the full light of happiness circled me round
As I gazed on her beauty, and, gazing, I found
The new look of love in her eyes.

And many an eve in the soft summer light,
With the disk of the sun dropping low,
Did we stray where the rivulet speeded its flight,
As we watched the blown reapers file home for the
night.
Through the long lanes in the tall swaying wheat
Did we stroll hand in hand, and our eyes would oft meet
With a fervid and passionate glow.

Oft did we lag while the large yellow moon
Clomb the bowl of her easterly slope :
And the downy-winged hours fled away all too soon,
But left us a pathway with happiness strewn.
And Faith-in-the-Future, with presaging Light,
Sought out for our vision gay homes of delight,
That were wrought from a roseate Hope.

III.

I noticed one morning, in passing before
The gate at the end of the long parterre,
That a visitor stood by the great hall door,
And a bright-burnished equipage glittered out there.
I knew him at once by his flashing display,—
In truth, over-flashing,—all tawdry and fine.
We had met, but I feared not he stood in my way,
Or endangered my case with this jewel of mine,

For Love was the anchor I reckoned my stay,
While he pinned his faith to a coarse show and shine.

Aye, he was a rival. Between us, 'twas clear,
'Twas the jay matching flight with the swallow :
The aye-aye in speed with the tawny wild deer,
That flits like the wind through the hollow.
But what if the sloth should yet wrest her from me ?
In the course of the world there have been sadder
sights.

In the matings of men, it is common to see
That weddings are made between eagles and kites ;
But the joinder of these two would properly be
One where a swan with a vulture unites.

For such a one was he. The commonest taste
Must have felt shocked at the best of his ways.
To see but his dress and his manner debased
Were enough, I should think, for the rest of one's
days,
For his vulgar coarse look, and his low sloping head,
Showed him unmannerly, stolid, and dull.
Yet gladly her father would witness her wed
This dolt, for the reason his pocket was full.
For, with her grim sire, a pocket well fed
Rendered a legion of shortcomings null.

To ward off the happening of what, with his pains,
Might possibly come in an unadvised day,
If the great heap of his easy-made gains
Should take themselves pinions and vanish away.
Easy made, do I say ? The half rightly is mine !
For this safe schemer, no great while ago,

Showed to my father an enterprise fine,
 With high-heaping profit to one who would go
 Into a thing of its simple design,
 Where the yield for the risking would ratably grow.

And his were the sinews for making the test ;
 His were the means to push onward the scheme :
 So chattels, and lands, and our home with the rest,
 Stood pledged for the loans that were furnished by him.
 And so when the time for this prophesied yield
 To dawn, with its lustre of money, had come,
 It fled from the clutch like the leaves of the field
 In the rush of the wind ! Not a tenth of the sum
 That my father laid out had its outcome revealed ;
 And he sat, fairly maddened, all speechless and dumb.

All speechless and dumb with the ruin that fell,
 Like the fire from a cloud, on his hardly-earned store.
 But there yet did a hope in our needfulness dwell,
 For the pledge over-valued the loaning, and more.
 But when a man falls and is low on the ground,
 What can his desperate struggles avail ?
 Can he loosen the meshes with which he is bound ?
 Can his mightiest efforts unaided prevail ?
 And with his heart bursting, my poor parent found
 His last vestige swept in the auctioneer's sale.

Engulfed in the maelstrom that people call debt.
 Gone, all gone,—vanished,—lands, houses, and pelf !
 And her father the buyer. Can I ever forget
 How he said he must do so or suffer himself ?
 Oh, venture that cost me what tears shed in vain !
 That cost me the head of my fountain : for when

Through a year had he walked in his heart-breaking pain,
He slept ; and I stood alone, penniless then ;
Only endowed with my hands and my brain,
And that pluck that belongs to American men.

Aye, with one other thing,—with a proneness to rhyme.
Gifted men call it ; and, not to speak evil
Of so gracious a thing, I have thought oftentime
I am the rather possessed of a devil,
Which seizes my moods, and inquiet awakes,
And pursuing a phantom I mutter and mope ;
My tongue it benumbs, and my slumber it breaks,
Absorbed in a phantasy blindly I grope,
Till the spirit has done with its torment, and takes
Such form of expression as lies in its scope.

Oh ! the torture to lie in the stillness of night
With an eye denied slumber, but closed as in sleep,
While a million of atoms of fire in the sight,
Whirling and spinning, incessantly sweep !
Oh ! were it not better to live like the swain,
In a dull round of labor, but stalworth in frame,
Than be bound as a slave to this trick of the brain,
Like those we name Poet in pages of fame ?
Aye, surely this day, when the sound of his strain
Falls where its witchery long has grown tame.

Ah, well ! what we are is no product of ours.

“It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.”
Like the garments that clothe us are fashioned our
powers,
For the thinker who thinks, and the digger who
delves.

Let us work as we are, with the hand and the head !
 Let us throttle Mischance with a lion's strong paw !
 So I turned from the grave where I buried my dead,
 And sought the first silent seclusion I saw,
 The solace, but oft with fatigue overspread,
 That lies in the road of the reading of Law.

But the ample rewards of the Law are delayed
 Till the foot-weary climber is dusty and gray ;
 And I but a step in the journey had made
 Through the dry fields where its pasturage lay.
 And this, in the eyes of her easy-riched sire,
 Was sufficient offence, if no other there was,
 To slight my essay when he saw me aspire
 To the hand of his daughter ; and yet graver flaws
 He pretended to find, to awaken his ire,
 When he saw that she shared not so trifling a cause.

Aye, I heard, as unpleasant things come to the ear,—
 The swifter, indeed, when the subject is worse,—
 That he mentioned my name with a scoff and a sneer ;
 But he favored the suit of this dolt of the purse.
 That his earnest persuasions, his threats, his commands,
 He in the cause of this Dives had used.
 But love is a fire whose earnestness stands
 In a steadier flame when by others abused ;
 Never smothered by buffets from alien hands ;
 Like the chamomile, growing the faster when bruised.

Leave a woman alone in these dainty affairs,
 To do just the reverse of the cunningest scheme.
 A deep self-assertion her character bears
 At the slightest dispelling of love's tender dream :

A righteous resentment at freedom denied
By officious inmeddling that others display ;
Though I gave to Alecta a higher than pride
At her own independence in having her way.
So it was, whate'er cause, that with her on my side,
I walked as a lord walks in recognized sway.

Till I went to the mansion, as often before,
And stood in the light of the vestibule dim.
At my ring came a servant attending the door,
And heard me my inquiries sullen and grim.
My love sent excuse and a letter for me.
I stood by the hall-lamp and shivered its seal.
Ah, gods, what a demon-face there did I see !
A coldest dismissal,—a vapid appeal
For my friendship. Ha ! friendship where love used to be ?
I crumpled the paper and ground with my heel !

IV.

Was it grief that I bore ?
Was it rage, was it hate ?
As I passed from the door ;
As I strode from the gate.

Went I forth in the night.
Up and down, up and down ;
Did I go till the light
For the hills wove a crown.

And I cursed of my Fate,
And I stamped with my feet.
Was there balm adequate
For the sting of this cheat ?

Has the world, in its way,
 More of good or of strife,
 When the weight of a day
 Overlies all a life?

Let us welcome the fact,
 More of good without doubt.
 Sweet was mine with this act
 Of Alecta left out.

But a Pleasure's a thing
 That is gone at a breath.
 Like the sound of the string,
 In its birth is its death.

While a Grief, standing tall,
 Sighted far o'er the plain,
 Throwing shade over all,
 Lives again and again.

And a bell through my head
 Rang a clamoring round.
 "Never thine, never wed!"
 Grew the voice of the sound.

"Never wed, never thine!"
 Sang the pulse in my ears,
 Till I well could incline
 To a weak burst of tears.

So my step never ceased,
 Up and down, up and down,
 Till the sun in the East
 For the hills wove a crown.

V.

Here I found me by a harbor, in a sullen, angry mood,
With a loosened flood of passion flowing in my heated
blood.

I had sworn a deep avowal that my heart should scorn
to grope

In the darkness of the shadow that had fallen on my
hope.

I would seek some other country, and, in wild adven-
ture's reign,

Drown the vision of Alecta in the whirling of the
brain.

Here before me lay a vessel filled for voyage outward
bound,

All her wings the breeze embracing, all her trunk alive
with sound.

In an hour I stood upon her; and it calmed my heat
to feel

How the sweeps of briny water gurgled up behind her
keel;

When I saw the light in spangles on the bosom of the
wave,

When there flapped a flag replying to the signs the
shoremen gave;

Saw the distant landscape sliding, growing dimmer on
the sight,

Saw the rugged cliffs receding, till I lost them in the
night.

Out she swept; I cared not whither. Where to me
was now my home,

Rather than the leaping billow, better than the Ocean's
foam?

I who fled to keep from thinking of the cheats that
Love had wrought,
Filling all my fount of promise with the dregs of bitter
thought.

On she swept, I recked not whither, under many a
shifting star ;
Many a sun in flaming splendor burned the water-line
afar ;
Scudding on by isle and isthmus, touching at some
jutting cape,
Blushing land of summer flowers, merry land of ripen-
ing grape ;
Borne in forward-reaching plunges now into the open
sea,
Now by port and headland passing, skimmed she on-
ward merrily ;
On by peak and promontory, till the vessel's sides we
felt
Slipping over reefs of coral lying in the Torrid belt.

And one morn when humid vapors veiled the sun's
slow-wheeling shield,
Vivid o'er the faint horizon stood a spectre form re-
vealed.
There a ship like ours was sailing ; looming huge in
hull and mast,
Rocking with a wavy quiver on the clouds that flitted
past.
Swept the wind through misty tackle, swept the breeze
through phantom sail,
Straining through the hazy rigging, where the sounds
of motion fail.

Then a fear fell on the sailors, such as in the battle's
 peal,
Rushing bolt and scattered splinters never yet had made
 them feel.
"See," they cried, "the Flying Dutchman ! See the
 death's-head at her prow !
Holy Christ, be swift to save us ! we are but as dead
 men now !"

So before a dim ideal fades the vigor of the man.
Some had hid, and some were flying ; some were pray-
 ing as they ran.
Slaves to blinded superstition, rugged lips began to
 pray :
Lips that knew not supplication since the dim-remem-
 bered day
When at loving mothers' teaching they had uttered
 infant prayer,
Save that awful shock of tempest smote the sea and
 filled the air.

I, of all the group that gathered at the vessel's edging-
 rail,
Saw no ghost my skin to prickle, felt no fear my cheek
 to pale.
Fended with the truths of science I could spurn this
 wild dismay,
Look with lip and nostril curling at the weakness of
 their way ;
I could gaze with lingering wonder at a vision in-
 stanced rare,
Born from rays of light refracting through the strata of
 the air.

Yet, of many-membered Error, this I reckoned not the
chief.

These were far above despising for a juggle of be-
lief.

Not to them the gains of scholars ; but their chart of
life had planned

Bronzed skin and toughened muscle, and the cordage-
hardened hand.

Narrowed in a life of labor how knew they of laws of
light,

All the mystic theme of optics, and illusions of the
sight?

Or if youth a space had yielded Culture's beckoning
hand to clasp,

Who may gather all the treasures that lie hoarded in
her grasp?

For the field of thought and knowledge ever widens in
its spread ;

Ever grows a doubling burden for the learning of the
head.

All the world is filled with printing : books and theses
multiply,

And the scholar dwindles Nature, overtaking brain and
eye.

Though he bends him to his reading till the living
essence flies,

Doth he gain—a dip of knowledge from the sea that
round him lies !

And I thought me what is Science? All the boasted
things we know

Leave us but as blinded insects groping in the dark
below.

Where hath Art, by facts discovered, holding 'Truth's
divining-rod,

Proved the corners of the morning, spying of the face
of God?

Who hath spun the fine alchemy, wrought of figments
of the mind,

That hath brought to light the hidden links that soul
to body bind?

Where the penetrating miner, who from murky shafts
hath brought

Ores to solve the hid enigma, baffling ages, WHAT IS
THOUGHT?

Who can tell the source of action in the drawing of
the breath?

Who can tell the spirit's vesture in the silent Isles of
Death?

Wisdom? How shall she be rated, when the utmost
light of men

Meets eclipse on every upland, dims at every mead and
fen?

This the ball for us constructed moves upon a won-
drous line,

Plan of self-adjusting balance, built for weal of human
kind.

Check and counter-check are working; man and plant
and living thing,

Gauged by rule of adaptation, in a governed order swing.

Tree and leaf and plant and grasses as a posted sentry
stand,

Strangling forms of cloaked diseases creeping softly
through the land.

They, with tubes and pipes of suction, on our voided
poisons feed,
Chemists in the scheme of Being, cleansing for the
human need.

Man to boast? when all the distance that his keenest
thought can probe
Is a single breath of ether from the space that wraps
the globe ;
Is the snow-flake on the meadow to the cloud that
covers all ;
Is the ripple in the current to the roaring water-fall.

All the varied vegetation springing in the spacious
earth,
Moving in the ordered method of the Will that gave it
birth,
Finds a place, a form, and manner, suited to the divers
spheres,
Filling out the ranks of Nature, and the cycles of the
years.

*In the fever-heated tropics palm and jungle-clump
are made
Wide in leaf and tuft of feather, casting deeper belts
of shade.
Through the sweep of cooler circles falls the leaf at
autumn time,
Shade when summer suns are glowing, light in winter's
hoary prime.

* In the preparation of this portion of the poem I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Chadbourne's admirable work on Natural Theology, particularly Chapter v., for suggestions.

Higher on, in frigid climate, barren land of ice and
snow,
Rear the larch and lofty spruces, wailing pines and
hemlock grow,
Fit with lithe and supple branches, bending to the
weight they bear,
When the lakes are locked in ice, and sifting fleece is
all the air ;
Splinter-leaved, compact of stature ; roofing in the
shape of cone ;
Built to stand the rigid winter, crisping in the northern
zone.

Science, with her shortened plummet, moving vaguely
in a dream,
Can but sound the fewest shallows, in the wide-extend-
ing scheme.

So I mused me. And the vision, fading slowly, now
was gone.

I was left to nurse my wonder, and the vessel bounded
on.

Plains we saw with groves of lemon, land of date and
spice we passed,

Winds that stole a rich aroma, all their pelf upon us
cast ;

Found we birds of novel figure, plumed in garb of
wondrous dye,

Myriad shells of pearly polish on the hardened beaches
lie.

All the earth was gay and happy. Only I a burden bore.
Only I, amidst its brightness, clanking chains of sorrow
wore.

For the ghost of Recollection, thousand visaged,
haunted me

And my spirit, vague and empty, in the silence of the
sea.

Oh, the hateful, hateful pauses in the heaving of the
deep!

When the floods of stinging memories came, and came,
and would not sleep.

Now returning breezes drive us to the distant-lying
lee,

And we cleave a track of fire through a phosphores-
cent sea.

Nearing now the rising mainland, hither drawn by
sudden chance,

Drove we in and cast the anchor, at a port of Southern
France.

VI.

Ha, on my life!

What sounds are these that fill the throbbing air?

Some noise of holiday, or country fair,

This drum and fife.

There banners stream,

And bugle blasts are dying far away.

I will ashore, and see this gala day

Of sunny gleam.

Ha, soldiers there!

And long lines glitter on the dress-parade!

And all of martial splendor is displayed

In sunlit air.

Long pennants dance,
The muskets glimmer and the sabres click ;
The trumpet shrilleth to my very quick
As ranks advance.

Streamed through the camp,
The nodding busby and the waving plume,
The prancer glistening from his careful groom,
In squadrons tramp.

This is no sport,
No idle play to charm the village churl,
And make the tardy-moving moments whirl
In faster sort.

What means it all ?
These sights and sounds are 'wilderer strange to me.
I heard no cause, when sailing on the sea,
That for them call.

I ask ; I find.
Huzza ! huzza ! Just fitted to my hand !
A cloud of war has bursted o'er the land,
With lightning lined.

Her border passed,
The German hosts are swarming on her soil ;
And back her huge leviathans recoil,
In panic cast.

And to the front
These troops will push on in a fevered heat,
To deal a blow in turn for Wörth's defeat,
In battle's brunt.

Enough for me !
Since maids are false, and I have none to care
If I should fall, what hinders me to dare
What is to be ?

Enough for me !
I give myself unto a forming line,
And France's contest now I make as mine
Right willingly.

Armed for the fray,
I stand accoutered as a fresh recruit ;
I give the passing chieftain staid salute,
Then march away.

VII.

Through all my veins a shock is sped,
I feel a sudden start ;
The bounding pulses leave my head,
And cluster round my heart.
The first quick burst of leaden hail
Comes hissing from a line of fire ;
One instant feels my courage quail,
And then I find it mounting higher.
Far to the right our thunders roar,
And tear the line with shell and shot,
And sow the trampled sod with gore
That drenched the field of Gravelotte.

A sulphur cloud the vision blinds,
And hides us from the foe ;
All day the tide of battle winds,
And wanders to and fro.

And we can see the muskets' flash,
And shakes the earth beneath our feet,
As madly on the squadrons dash,
Or back are thrown in wild retreat.
Long curving lines slope o'er the sward,
With clenching teeth and musket set,
And down upon the foe are poured,
In lines of levelled bayonet.

And forward with the mass I sprung ;
But, as I onward bound,
A whistling sphere leaps through my lung,
And bears me to the ground.
A flood of blood streams down my blouse ;
A mist before my vision swims ;
I seek my fainting sense to rouse,
But cannot rise for languid limbs.
With plunging shot the turf is torn,
In heaps around me as I lie,
Till from the darkening field I'm borne,
With even chance to live or die.

VIII.

At last, at last, the war is done,
And France has lost :
Her fortune falling like the sun,
At grievous cost.

And I had languished on my bed,
In hospital,
When scores there were of happier dead
In funeral pall.

For there I lay, a wreck in frame,
A wreck in weal ;
A wound that all my strength did claim,
And would not heal.

No tie, no kin, in that strange land,
Nor any here ;
But some were buried by my hand,
And they were dear.

I wished again to cross the deep,
And here to die ;
And when my eyelids closed in sleep
By them to lie.

Most fitting did it seem to me
That on the ground
Where hope was crushed for me should be
My grass-grown mound.

Would, when she strolled the churchyard through,
She grief express
For one poor atom whom she slew
With faithlessness ?

That land of France did not forget
Me in her pain ;
She gave me aid, and safely set
Me here again.

IX.

It was scarcely a day they had laid me at home,
When the word was brought to me Alecta had come.

Had come? And to see me? Aye, if she has prayed,
Why let her come in to the wreck she has made!
I saw as she came, in the blackest of lace,
That sorrow had saddened the look of her face.
And was it for me this full mourning gown?
And was it for me that her tears trickled down?
She lifted her veil and uttered a shriek,
And rushed to my arms before I could speak.
My thin wasted cheek she wildly caressed,
While she tenderly kept from my poor wounded breast.
And then in her claspings and sobbings I learned
How our brightness of day unto blackness had turned.

And oh curse on the folly, oh curse on the flight,
I made in the haste of that miserable night!
I sped, and left nothing behind me that said
Aught of my going or whither I fled;
No mention of place in the sun's burning track,
From which she could bid me to hasten me back,
To tell me the letter, though writ with her hand,
Was done to accede to her father's demand,
And at his dictation; but meaning in all
To have seen me in person, the words to recall:
That her messenger sought me by rise of the dawn,
With word to come to her, and lo! I was gone.
That her father, when seized with a sickness he lay,
And nigh unto death, had besought her to pray
A forgiveness to him for the wrong he confessed
In his thwarting the passion that kindled her breast;
And gave us his blessing, as she knelt by his side,
With his last feeble gasping for breath ere he died.

Tears, burning tears, be ye rage or of grief,
Tears, springing tears, oh, I feel your relief!

Darling of mine, I will live, if the will
By the force of resolve can enliven me still !
Inspired by the sight of thy beauty and truth,
I will yet gather up shattered fragments of youth.
I will live, oh my love,—live to cancel in time
The sorrows that clouded our earlier prime ;
Live in the sunlight of love to repair
The evil that came from my hasty despair.

But alas ! for the wretch who is broken by fate.
Alas ! for the creature who loves, but must wait
While the coveted years from his open hand slip,
And the cup of possession recedes from his lip.

FROM A NEW-YEAR CAROL.

JANUARY I, 1871.

I SAW, one eve, at set of summer's sun,
A sight to make the hottest blood-vein run
With horror cold : a game 'twixt Life and Death ;
The fate of thousands hanging on a breath.
The destiny of Europe was the stake.
Life took the dice, and lo ! his hand did shake.
He cast them ; lost ; and Death, with sickening joy,
To get his gains did fiendish arts employ.
At his command two princes drew the sword,
And thousands followed at those princes' word.
Then Death's awful carnival began,
And precious blood in gurgling currents ran.

Death-dealing shells rushed screaming through the air,
Proclaiming of the thirsty slayer there ;
The light of houses flush the midnight sky ;
Their crackling flames engulf th' expiring cry
Of babe and mother, whose untimely end
No arm is stretched, or bosom, to defend.

Lo ! France's eagle, borne before the host
Of victorious Prussia, sees her lost ;
Sees her armies scattered at a blow,
Despite the valor her Douay can show ;
Her chief and men surrendered to her foes ;
McMahon thrown on whom her hopes repose.
From Strasbourg's tower, and o'er the crumbling
moats
Of Metz's fortress, Prussia's ensign floats ;
Nor yet disaster's whelming tide abates,
Impatient legions swarm at Paris' gates.

Great God ! shall mankind e'er that moment see
When nations shall through all the world be free ?
When not because another says they're hurled
To bloody battle, more like puppets twirled ;
When, if they wish, swords may forever rust ;
When, if they war, 'tis that they *will*, not *must* ?

God speed the day, my friend, God speed the day !

'Tis a thing that you and I may never see.

But for all that yet we ought to pray

That in His providence such a thing may be.

But while I speak of Death, you will agree

I now will tell of one whose wide-spread grief
Bespoke a good and great man's spirit free

From out its dwelling in our midst so brief.
'Tis the gentler virtues mourning for their chief.

I've been where death showered,
Like to rain crimson red ;
Where the pestilence lowered,
Like to clouds overhead.
But these, with their horror,
Fail largely to borrow
A half the world's sorrow
That Dickens is dead.

The great Humanizer
Is among us no more.
Woe's deep sympathizer
Has left us to soar.
And his sad people, weeping
O'er the clay that is sleeping,
Lone vigils are keeping
Where Dickens is dead.

They've laid him to slumber
In Westminster's aisle.
Not merits to number,
Or eyes to beguile.
For his last wish denouncing
Display, but pronouncing
For a plain stone, announcing
Charles Dickens is dead.

Again, I have seen a land burdened with woe,
From whose bosom of sorrow the bitter tears flow ;

Where mountain and valley, low hillock and plain,
Is draped with the emblems of sorrow and pain.
'Tis the bright sunny South where the thick gloom is
spread ;
They mourn that their idolized chieftain is dead.
A wailing came from them, like the moan of the sea,
When was wafted to heaven the spirit of Lee.

(From the same.)

“WHAT ART THOU, YEAR?”

“I AM the son of one,” he said,
“Whose business is destroying ;
And he and I together work,
Our energies employing.
We crumble empires, temples, shrines,
Which man, in vain endeavor,
Has reared upon the silly hope
That they would last forever.
Oh, what vain and silly hope,
That they would last forever !

“We lay our torch upon the young,
And lo ! their locks are hoary.
We do but nod at palaces,
And gone is all their glory.
There's not a foeman in the world
That we can not dissever,

Except the sea, whose mighty swell,
Defeats our strength forever :
Except the sea, whose rolling swell,
Defeats our strength forever.

“ As we pursue our onward march
No power can delay us.
Our ruthless footsteps scorn the cries
Men make with hope to stay us.
We neither halt nor stop our tread ;
Our step is laggard never ;
From earth's first moments thus we've gone,
And thus we'll go forever.
Yea, thus from Nature's morn we've marched,
And thus we'll go forever.

“ My life is like the life of man.
In four parts they divide it.
First childhood ; youth ; then manhood ; age ;
Man's is the same beside it.
My father's name is *TIME* : and mine
The *YEAR*. Even I must sever
My thread of life whene'er he calls ;
Yea, I must go forever.
Hark ! hark ! he calls ! There, I must go !
Yea, I must go forever ! ”

MARGARET MAIN.

THERE lived in Berwick, in an earlier day,
These two young lives in closest bondage bound :
Margaret Main, a dark, full-passioned girl,
With lustrous flashing eyes, and raven locks ;
And Barbara Gress, a gentler-natured child,
With milder bearing, and a sunny face,
Itself an ensign of the living truth :
And these loved Philip Pride, an orphan boy.

Now Margaret, with the hot, impulsive life
Of warmer climate speeding in her veins,
Laid bare her heart to Barbara, unasked,
Of all her love of Philip. And when Barbara heard,
She set the seal of silence on her tongue,
And hid her feelings, for their onward course
Was contrawise to Margaret ; and not
In least betrayal, or by word, or look,
Occasion gave that either one might know.
And in her inner heart she bade herself
Not love this Philip, for that Margaret did ;
Took solemn counsel of her secret thought,
And laid far-reaching plans of how she would
Dismiss his image and efface his name.
But when was Love the subject of command ?
Or when was stern Resolve so closely knit
Against it but that through its meshes came
That native heat that steals along the mind ?
And whether 'twas that Philip's orphanage

Stole on her heart, for such had been her fate,
Or whether 'twas that undetected spring
That makes a soul to soul to gravitate,
As does that mystic force in central earth,
That lies concealed beyond all human ken,
With substance, drawing all with tyrant will:
Be whatsoe'er the cause, in spite of all,
Deep in her secret heart she loved him well.
For smothered fires may smoulder, but they burn.

And Philip, as the rosy clouds of youth
Bore on unto the tropic line of life,
Felt his affections in their natural drift
Select between the dove's and eagle's flight,
The summer sunset and the noontide heat ;
And Barbara he chose.

And then he came
In comely manhood, with a pleading tongue,
With youth's proud bearing, love-enkindled eyes,
And wandering with her in the twilight dim,
Down where a shallow, chattering little stream
Plunged in and hid itself among the fields,
He took her fluttering little hands in his,
And spoke his love.

But she, with gentle heed
Of Margaret, and the trust she had reposed,
And not to deal in underhanded way,
Did give him nay: but with averted face,
And eyes she could not trust to look in his.

And he, persistent, pressed her more and more.
She, now in yielding now in firmer mood,
Had put him off, and put him off again,

Until her own love triumphed, and she gave
Her promise, and they were together bound.

And soon this came to Margaret ; and she,
Now filled with hate, confronted Barbara,
And fixed her with a long and stony stare.

“ And *you* have been *my* friend ! ”

“ Nay, Margaret, hear !

I pray you hear me ere you cast me off. ”

“ No ; you betrayed me and my trust. You used
The gift I gave to steal his heart away.
You practised on me with your mean design,
And for your end. ”

“ No, no ; I did by you,
Dear Margaret ! all that you would have me do.
He never brought me tufts of violets sweet,
He gathered by our hedge, but that I told
How well you loved them and their sweet perfume.
He never brought wild climbers from our rock,
There where his strong and shapely limbs had scaled,
But I bethought me how their colors fit
To your dark hair ; and for this prayed him take
To you their beauties, rather than to me. ”

“ And you did this for me ? Oh, see your craft
To make yourself the stronger, I away,
By wearying him with mentionings of me. ”

“ Nay, not in craft I did it, but in truth.
But listen, Margaret ; he would have it so.
And what I did, I did for you. For though
I held it from you, as you spoke to me,
And held it from him till I gave my vow,
Yet, in all my doing, in my heart
I loved him, loved as deeply as did you. ”

But Margaret, all unmelted by her warmth,
All untouched by her softness and her truth,
All unforgiving in her hardened heart,
With cold disdain a cruel answer made :
“ Your double-dealing will repay you yet ;
Some evil fortune will o’ertake you yet.”
She turned and moved away, and all the air
Seemed laden with the cruel words she spake :
“ Some evil fortune will o’ertake you yet.”

And Philip and Barbara were wed.
And fortune dealt not with him easily,
Though much he strove. The world and men were
hard.

And children came, and died, until but one
Remained,—a blooming girl of three sweet years,
With mild eyes shot with heaven’s blue : the light
That lay within her smile companion with
The sunshine tangled in her scattered curls ;
While on her cheek the lily and the rose
Did ever for the mastery contend.

Now Philip, in his wrestle with the world,
Had gained himself a pleasant little farm.
Aye, pleasant, though from neighbor far remote.
And here he wrought, with sweat of daily toil,
At storing up for Barbara and the babe.
And one eve, in the chill of autumn-time,
He went forth gathering fagots for his hearth.
And that his beast was jaded with its toil,
He lingered, resting later than his wont ;
Lingered till the gloom of night drew on,
And heaven’s expanse was spangled with her stars.

And Barbara, much employed about the house,
With preparation of the evening meal ;
To make the room look bright, and neat, and trim ;
The hearth to blaze with deep and ruddy glow,
For welcome of him from the biting air ;
Yet often stood beside the open door,
And listened for his coming on the road,
But heard it not. Annette, the rosy child,
With little playthings gathered in her arms,
Sat, laughed, and gladdened in the firelight's glow,
For Philip's face awatch.

And Barbara thought,
He cannot hear my voice nor see my face
When he is far ; but I will set for him
A lamp within the window, so its light
May stream far down and greet him on the way.
She took her lamp from off the chimney shelf,
And set it with a burning wisp aflame ;
Then tossed the wisp, with careless backward throw,
As though to reach the deep heart of the fire ;
But, sent with aim misguided, on the shelf
It struck, and bounded off, and still aflame,
It settled in the foldings of her robe.

A moment stood she brushing o'er the lamp,
Itself a polished globe, then gently slid
Into a fair and fast-dissolving dream ;
How Philip wooed her in the twilight dim,
Down by the shallow, chattering little stream,
That plunged and hid itself among the fields ;
His manly manner and his comely form ;
How he had wed her ; and her golden ring ;

The happy hours that crowned their mingled lives ;
The little graves that rose behind the hill ;
And all the while the lurking peril lay
Close hid within the foldings of her robe.

Till of a sudden burst the devouring flame
And spread upon her, and encompassed her
With horrid wreath. Then, with piercing shrieks
And wildest cries of terror, forth she sped
Like gleaming meteor o'er the darkened plain,
Crying, " Help ! help ! help me ! Save me,—Philip,
—save ! "

But there was not human ear to catch her cry !
There was not human hand to succor her !
So, all undone with agony and fear,
She fell prostrate down, and writhing lay,
While the dread demon still around her curled !

Now Philip, lingering later than his wont,
Was far away and did not hear her cry.
And anon, when drawing homeward, spied
The distant brightness of his window-pane.
But nearer to him saw he moving lights,
Heard hurrying footsteps, and the cries of pain.
And drawing on, he asked of one who ran
Back from the scene the cause. And he,
Who knew the voice of Philip, said, " Pride, be calm !
It is your wife ! " And Philip, shocked and stunned
At what he knew not, fetching in his breath,
Ran staggering on, and thrust in 'mongst the crowd,
And fell down by her with a mighty cry
Of, " Gracious God ! And what has come to pass ? "

Then softly, when he learned, he lifted her,
And bore her gently to their little home.

Oh, the anguish of that dreadful night !
The grief of spirit and the pain of frame !
As the slow hours waned, her poor life lay
Fluttering in the dawning of the end ;
Faintly, feebly, until died the dark ;
And then, with hand within her Philip's hand,
Rest and sweet peace fell on her, and her soul
Went out to meet and greet the morning stars.

And Philip went from that morn a stricken man.
And soon a sickness seized him, and he lay
Broken in heart and hope, and sick in mind,
Only rallying for his daughter's sake,
And only feebly then. And so he died.
And slow they bore him just beyond the hill,
And there, among the tiny little graves,
They laid him down to slumber, at the side
Of her he living ever loved so well.

And Margaret came and took the little child,
And set it in her home. For kinsmen's death
Had left her now a person of estate,
Though still unwed. And ever when it raised
Its little voice in tearful wonderment,
Calling for the face that never came,
"Mother ! Father ! Where has mother gone ?"
She folded it upon her virgin breast,
Smoothed its sun-crowned brow ; kissed its tears ;
And softly said, "*I am your mother, child !*"

THE WRANGLER.¹

THIS morn there passed my window by
A form of man of bearing high,
With head erect to view the sky,
And mind that flashed in face and eye.

His hair was smooth, and white his face ;
And culture lent him easy grace.
He seemed as one that finds a place,
Amid the ranks of finer race.

He passed : and in my mind there lay
A hidden doubt, that found its way
To sport in disputative play,
And bathe in higher light of day.

And thus the thought said unto me :
“ Lo, see the man ! And can it be
That he is kin of far degree
To other types of men we see ?

“ Are brothers these, the black, the red ;
The shallow skull, the arching head ;
Who follow back one common thread,
To one conjoint beginning led ? ”

And I for answer, faint and slight :
“ I cannot set this matter right.
But why disturb a sleeping light ?
Live on by faith, if not by sight.

“I cannot sound the dark abyss
That lies around man’s primalness ;
I can but say, in things like this,
I found my faith on Genesis.”

“Faith?” said it ; “Faith? oh, aye and aye !
But should one’s self be guided by
The lead of vague beliefs, too high
To meet the grasp of mind and eye?”

And I returned, “Yes, doubter, yes !
How many things we fondly press
To trusting hearts, and never guess
If truth be more or error less !”

The wrangler made reply oblique :
“The dove ne’er mated with the shrike.
And ne’er didst thou on instance strike,
But that the like produced the like.

“Since birth of Time, however late,
The beasts that roam in savage state
Do each their own kind propagate,
Nor with strange race amalgamate.

“And though thou may’st, in instance, find
Some crossing on from kind to kind,
Yet are they to their sort confined,
And not with different breeds combined.

“Thou wilt not find upon the mead
Nor golden grain, nor worthless weed,
But that, for earth’s peculiar need,
Gives down its own especial seed.

“What wilt thou say of man? That he
Escapes from these conditions free,
And through man’s wide diversity
Holds distant consanguinity?”

“Such thing,” said I, “do men maintain.
The Book makes not the matter plain.
It only says that evil Cain,
His forehead bearing murder’s stain,

“Did eastwardly his journey trace :
There found he an abiding-place.
He had a wife, and reared his race,
As age and years drew on apace.

“But if his partner he derived
From ‘Land of Nod,’ or if he wived
In that first home where once he thrived,
No man to know hath yet contrived.

“The first would give deduction fair
That other stocks of men were there
Than this recorded single pair,
Whose type and style we claim to bear.”

“Deduction? Aye, thou well dost know,
From what we see, it must be so :
For there are tribes of men who grow
Of color black and forehead low.

“And ’neath the wheeling Zodiac
Thou ne’er hast seen the sight, good lack !
In colors mixed such cunning knack,
That white with white produced a black !”

I: "Climate may have wrought the change.
Conditions former states estrange.
That substance should its shade exchange
Is something neither rare nor strange."

The doubter's answer came not slow:
"When sawest thou from climate's glow
The swan the color of the crow,
The raven clad in plumes of snow?"

I said, "Though vainly did I look
To solve these things from out my Book,
My faith the failure little shook.
Such puny blows it well can brook."

The wrangler then said unto me,
"Thy Book is partial history.
Who writes his genealogy
Doth trace but one especial tree.

"What more dost thou expect of him,
Who gave the world this outline dim?
He wrote when hoary ages grim
Had set beneath th' horizon's rim."

I said, "What if I grant it thee
The chart *is* made imperfectly,
And gives no close chronology,
To forge the links with nicety?

"There is assurance clear that rings
In later times, from other things,
To stay the faith that in us clings,
That man from one beginning springs.

“And though the thing may seem to be
The offspring of simplicity,
Yet in my soul it pleaseth me
Like this to weave my theory.

“When life in great creation’s plan
Th’ ascending scale of Nature ran,
It filled the sketch that God began,
As found in time Silurian.²

“And Man, the last in gift and worth,
What time as man he gained his birth,
Was placed in midst of part of earth,
Redeemed from out the liquid dearth,

“While other parts, as yet submerged,
Had not from ice and frost emerged ;
For Man to height of Being surged
When the icy state to waning verged.

“This, my belief, may go astray,
And far from right ; but who can say
But round the frozen pole there stay
Some lingerings of the glacial day ?

“As when some snowy winding-sheet
Melts off before the sun’s strong heat
On northern hillsides, wilt thou meet
With tufts dissolved, but incomplete.

“When summer into autumn blends,
We never know, from change she sends,
Without the aid our tablet lends,
When one begins or other ends.

“And so this epoch would have slid
Serenely on, and sunk amid
The graves where long its sires had hid,
But men such gross transgressing did.

“To cleanse the canker of their vice
God swelled the heat, by wise device,
And sunk the mountains in a trice
With meltings of the world of ice.

“But first, as an especial mark
Of favor to the patriarch,
Bade righteous Noah build an ark,
And with his kith and kin embark,

“With stocks that did in earth abound.
All other living things were drowned,
And far as sight of eye could bound
There was no view of solid ground

“Till, when the waters long had raged,
A wind blew up, the flood assuaged ;
And they, from floating home uncaged,
In husbandry once more engaged.

“Why need I recapitulate
Of Noah’s wine-besotted state,
Save for the curse that did await
On Ham, for act indelicate?

“For Noah, rising wrathfully,
When knew he his indignity,
Thus deeply cursed his progeny :
‘A slave of servants shalt thou be !’

“ And since that day Ham’s offspring rude,
Through fortune’s strange vicissitude,
In divers climes and latitude,
Have groaned in villain servitude.”

I wakened all his wily craft,
And loud and long the scoffer laughed,
Like one with veins afire from draught
Of heating wines, from beaker quaffed.

“ Thy reasoning is worse than slack !
Thou leavest a point and comest back,
Like coursers on a racing-track.
These men were white ! whence comes the black ?

“ And wilt thou say this man obscure
Did exercise a power so sure
That cursing son for deed impure
Did make that son a blackamoor ?

“ Much dost thou know how stands the case,—
Of whether, from thy molten glace,
This flood did smother all the race,
Or only in restricted space.

“ Thou sayest that the wide belief
In different tribes of some such grief,
From which a few obtained relief,
Is evidence nor slight nor brief.

“ I say that if this fluid wrath
Embraced all nations in its path,
What lore each separate species hath
Is knowledge of an automath.

“ And since thy book doth plainly fall
Below the point of telling all,
Canst thou its story truthful call?
Is false in part not false in all?

“ Wilt thou believe when it is said
That man by God’s own hand was made,
When science, with dissecting blade,
Hath late the method all displayed,

“ And seen how, through the link of apes,
His perfect form at last escapes
Across the gulf that widely gapes
Between the man and lowest shapes?”

I said, “ I am not wholly bound
To think that God scooped from the ground
A lump of clay, and rolled it round.
Such is not in the Scripture found.

“ He may have made a germ of clay,
Which as a germ for ages lay ;
For in each one creative DAY
’Tis sure that cycles rolled away.

“ And who will dwarf the power of God,
To say that He, who with a nod
Could make the man, whole ages trod
In working on a senseless clod?

“ ’Tis not forbid that this is true :
He made a germ, which lapped and grew
Till ready, in conditions new,
For work that He would have it do ;

“ And then He fitted it with mind,
To guide that state of novel kind
Which, come to knowledge, it did find
Above the ones it left behind.

“ For in my Scripture is it told
That AFTER He had made the mould
He breath into its nostrils rolled,
And Man became thence *living-souled*.

“ And does the thought arouse thy mirth?
Behold the child, before its birth,
With eyes and organs made for Earth,
But as it lieth nothing worth.

“ But ushered to the light of day,
The vital air begins its sway
Upon the ready lungs, that lay
Unconscious of their power to play.

“ Then, since there may be life sustained
Before the point when breath is gained,
Why may not Man have life obtained
Before a mind within him reigned?

“ But whether 'twas that Earth was manned,
The product of one lone command,
Turned glowing from the Maker's hand,
And made full-strengthened and fleshed to stand,—

“ To stand perfected grown and firm,—
Or whether first He made the germ,
Which lapped and grew through lengthened term,
Till last it took some form of worm,

“Endowed with strength to stir and rise,
As from their hulks the butterflies,
Till bursting from its former ties,
It basked beneath the brighter skies,

“What time its all-foreknowing Sire
Did fill it with immortal fire,
And bade it hold unquenched desire
To seek for Truth from high to higher

“It matters not. And what care I?
In either case none can deny
He made the man; and this reply
Demolishes thy sophistry.

“Thou canst not fright with idle fears.
The body's tenant disappears.
To faith in life the soul adheres
Serenely through the waste of years.”

1875.

H Y M N

SUNG AT THE OPENING SERVICES OF CHRIST CHURCH
CHAPEL, LITTLE ROCK, ARK., NOV. 5, 1876.

AIR—“Old Hundred.”

I.

OH, Father, bless this sacred place,
Which for Thy glory now we rear;
And may the riches of Thy grace,
Be on Thy people gathered here!

II.

Here would we seek the Church, Thy bride,
In this fair fane of bright array.
Oh, draw us, Saviour, near thy side,
That we may see Thou art the way !

III.

Incline our hearts to seek Thine aid,
And turn our thoughts to things above !
May numbers at this shrine be made,
To feel the sweetness of Thy love !

IV.

So teach us, Lord, our faith to cast
Upon Thy Word, which firmly stands,
That we may gain, when life is past,
A home with Thee not made with hands.

A CHRISTENING TOKEN.

TO ANNIE MACDONALD COCKRILL.

I.

“BRING violets for a maiden dead !”
So ran the poet Shelley’s lay.
What shall I bring to deck thy head,
Thou who art only born to-day ?

II.

Not flowers from the summer mead,
The tinted tuft from autumn heath ;
Some more excelling thing I need
To match the light that lies beneath

III.

The Master's cross upon thy brow.
For from His high abiding-place
Christ bent His look on thee but now,
And crowned thee with His richest grace,

IV.

To teach that crown succeeds to cross
As step by step our lives unfold ;
Like, as in native ores, the dross
Is mingled with the finer gold.

V.

For who would unto strength attain
Must bear the weight of being weak.
And who can hope the prize to gain
Except that bowed in toil he seek ?

VI.

So hence from thy baptismal morn
May you, oh child, as years increase,
Through sun and shade, through flowers and thorn,
Find "lilies of eternal peace!"

MOUNT HOLLY.

SIGH, sigh; oh, low-complaining pine !

Thy grief finds answer in my laden breast,
Thou fitting warder to these dead of mine,
Who here beneath thy deepest rootlet rest.

Wave thy broad arms and lift thy pennants tall,
As mocking age and death in depth of strength !
Thou, too, as sprung from seed of time, wert small,
And lapped thy vigor on from length to length.

Thou boastest leaves of splinter, ever green ;
The hoary-fingered ages touch thee mild.
There will not be, in endless cycles, seen
The full-grown man that was not first a child.

No thing exempt from long, slow growth is found,
From something here to something farther on.
The seed, matured, that hideth in the ground,
Becomes the base to build the stalk upon.

Thou creepest on the same, though seasons change ;
Thy strength doth swell and doth not waste away.
The volume that thou gatheredst in thy range
Through yesterlight becomes thy hoard to-day.

Yea ! like shall these that sleep beneath thy feet ;
Up from the point that here they reached they rise.
What gains their strength availed them to complete
Shall prove their stepping-stones in paradise.

The Old Year dies in deep mid-winter's rime :

In winter's rime the New Year draws its breath.

The New Year launches in the fields of time

Out from the point reached at the Old Year's death.

All gifts of grace and meekness ; sense and powers ;

The wealth of mind from long pursuing caught :

These are the buds that open into flowers,

Full ripened in that universe of thought.

Sigh, sigh, oh, low-complaining pine !

I take thy lonely murmurings to my breast.

Right well thou hintest that these dead shall shine,

Although their structures here below thee rest.

1876.

MOUNTAIN MEADOWS.³

HILLS, low lying, skirt a grassy plain,

Where years ago was wrought a deed of Cain.

And vengeance cried for unoffending slain.

Where slopes the mead in summer verdure dressed,

Stretched toward the gateways of the golden west

A winding train of wagons onward pressed.

Deep-freighted with the dearest ties of life,

Their worldly all ; the charge of child and wife ;

These sons of toil sought for a new world's strife.

But there a demon horde in ambush lay
Of savage leaders thirsting for the prey,
Devoid of pity, stern, flint-hearted, they

When once the captives in possession stood,
Turned loose their hell-born hate, a raging flood,
And in an hour were gorged with murdered blood !

Shall laws of God and man be held for naught ?
Shall justice not arise, and men be taught
That soon or late she taketh whom she ought ?

Yea ! though she lags clogged hard of feet and limbs ;
Yea ! though in sluggishness her eye-sight dims ;
Yet turns she ever, and her lamp she trims

To pierce the night with penetrating ray,
To search the utmost corners of the day,
And track the culprit as he slinks away.

As the keen hound, when watchful of the deer
That's now in sight, and now doth disappear,
Doth still unto the vanished trace adhere ;

So she through all the changes that have been ;
Through time wherein the rocks with moss grew
 green ;
Past clouds of war and all the race hath seen,

Bore up her torch to guide her rambling tread,
Reached forth her hand through all the long years
 sped,
And fixed her clutch on one chief guilty head.

And then when fell her long-uplifted sword,
When, flashed, her earth-compounded thunders roared,
And deadly lightnings on that bosom poured,

Where hills, low-lying, skirt the grassy plain
On which of old was wrought that deed of Cain,
Lo ! vengeance stood appeased for unoffending slain.

1877.

DANGER.

SOFTLY he her ripe cheek presses,
Gazes in her eyes of brown,
Toys a moment with her tresses,
Toys a moment,—and looks down.
She is sitting still and pensive,
Matching each his gusty sighs ;
But she is not apprehensive,
Love is mantling in his eyes.
Pledged they are not yet, but often
Have they shown, in hundred signs,
Little things that love will soften,
Where a cold restraint confines.
Touched he is with just sufficient
Of the heavenly spirit's flame
Not to make his suit deficient,
And his ardor to proclaim.
Oh ! but his is earnest truly,—
So she fancies in her mind ;
And she thinks he loves her duly,
And her heart repays in kind.

Backward turn, oh, trustful maiden !
Shun the cliff beneath thy feet ;
Ere thy heart, with sorrow laden,
Bows and breaks in grief complete.
Oh ! he now may act in honor,
Naught but truth his soul may know.
Wrecked ! if she relies upon her
Own weak means to keep him so.
Passion is a mighty giant,
Raging like the rushing storm :
Honor is a willow pliant,
Bending when the blood is warm.
When one treads that kingdom's portal
Where this spirit dwells within,
He must needs be more than mortal
If he feels no hint of sin.
He who launches in the river,
Where the cataract loudly calls,
Feels his light bark whirl and shiver,
And then tumbles o'er the falls.

Graves there be by green-banked meadows ;
Graves there be on uplands brown ;
Graves in yew-trees' dusky shadows ;
Tombs in every burg and town,
Whence come voices, low and lonely :
" No intent of sin was there.
I began in honor only,
But I ended in despair ! "

“WE SAT BESIDE THE RUSHES.”

I.

WE sat beside the rushes,
When the summer day was fair ;
Her face, suffused with blushes,
Peeped through her golden hair.
My arm was drawn around her,
And her cheek lay next to mine ;
And I within my bosom felt
That love was half divine.

II.

Oh limber reeds and rushes,
Will ye outlive this love ?
When death our heart-beat hushes,
Will ye still wave above ?
Oh shallow murmuring streamlet,
That ripplest on in glee,
Wilt thou not change, and dry, and cease,
Ere that this love shall flee ?

III.

Lo, now beside the rushes,
In the evening's hush I stray ;
The streamlet sings and gushes
Just as it did that day ;

The reeds are green and bending,
But her I do not spy ;
For since that day she's changed her mind,
Has changed—and so have I.
1877.

THE POET'S SONG.

HE sang a song at early morning time,
When merry birds sang with him in the trees,
And scarce the sun began to quench the dew.
He sang because his heart was full of song,
And they, perchance, who, passing heard the lay,
Said, "Hear the singer ! If he persevere,
Some day his singing may be fit to hear."

He sang again : at noontide's sultry time,
When resting in a deep and quiet shade.
This time his singing was with greater care,
He pitched his tone and voice in finer strain ;
But they who heard it heard with fevered blood,
With pulse too hot and quick to linger near,
And said, "Oh singer, by-and-by we'll hear !"

He sang again when evening shadows came.
But now his song had echoes of despair,
Of broken hope from patient waiting born ;
Because that, since he could not choose but sing,
They, hearing, had put off so long to hear.

And harvesters of corn, and wine, and oil,
Said, "Fool! why sing? Gain these, like us, from
toil!"

And then he sang no more. And o'er his breast
The robin, lightly hopping in the spring,
Heard from the grasses whispering to the wind :
"The poet's heart is like that windy harp
That murmurs music to each breeze that blows ;"
And those above him, as they passed along,
Said, "Had he lived, he might have made a song."

Oh, ever far away and never near!
But still he sings, for song is joy and breath.
And thus the silver sands drip quickly on,
Till from the nerveless hand slips down the harp,
And with its pulses dies away the song.
And only by the sudden silence sprung
Do men perceive that lately one hath sung.

1877.

SIN NO MORE.

THEY brought her, found in evil deed,
And bade her by the Master stand.
He gave their scoffings little heed,
But stooped and wrote upon the sand.

He wrote: nor listened to the jeers
That came from those who gathered round ;
For sin against repentant tears
With him weighs light as thistle-down.

As what he traced upon the ground
Would winds and rain obliterate,
So should they, when a fault was found,
Not petrify : let time abate.

And who should in her judgment stand ?
Or who condemn her failing ? None
But him who, with a spotless hand,
Should first against her cast a stone !

And they, amazed to find rebuke
Where men would yield so ripe assent,
Went forth abashed in word and look,
But sowed the scandal as they went.

Aye, revelled in the infamy ;
For such delight a scandal gives,
Where hundred virtues fail and die
Unknown, a single error lives.

Oh Calumny, thou clinging burr
To catch the skirts of all who pass,
And dim their lustre, like the blur
That breath puts on the pane of glass !

Thou waitest not the proven case,
But seizest on the lightest thing ;
With wink, and nudge, and wry grimace,
Thou dost abroad thy venom fling.

Though closed in steel the victim waits,
Thou yet some evil way dost find
To pass beyond his armor plates,
And leave thy rankling sting behind.

These had of proof no lack nor stint ;
And yet *He* passed the evil by.
Thou needest but the slightest hint
To make thy poisoned arrows fly.

How better were the Christly way,
To blunt the ear when whispers pour ;
And were the sin *confessed*, to say,
“Oh woman, go, but sin no more !”
1877.

TO JOHN G. WHITTIER,

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY,
DECEMBER 17, 1877.

SEVENTY winter snows have left
No frost about thy heart.
The same sweet spirit that we knew,
As the rill that flowed thy whole life through,
Still shows thee as thou art.

Thy song is of the inner life,
And therefore is it sweet.
There's no kind pulse in the human soul
But in thy high thought we behold
Thine own in union beat.

Like Alpine shepherds, when at dusk
They sound the evening horn,

In circling echoes far below
The sounds leap down, and ringing go
Unto the valleys borne.

So from the height which thou hast gained
Thou givest a pleasing note,
Which down the years shall circle on.
Through generations grown and gone
Will its soft vibrations float.

Poet ! I have not seen thy face,
Nor clasped thy kindly hand :
Yet in my heart a love hath sprung,
Because of much that thou hast sung,
When I its beauties scanned.

And I can warmly wish to thee
That, in the coming time,
Thou, hale, through years may'st yet be spared
To feed the board where we have shared
Thy rhythm and thy rhyme.

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT.

A FIRESIDE IDYL.

THE winter frost is on the ground ;
The nipping air is clear and keen ;
The pale moon, rising cold and round,
Lights clustered fires of diamond sheen ;
The cold without but doubly shows
The cheer within grow high and bright,
Where on the hearth the oak-fire glows,
And floods the room with warmth and light.

Across the floor, upon the wall,
Beyond the heat the embers throw,
Distorted shadows upward crawl,
And profiles there fantastic grow.
No lamp is needed in the flare
That shines out in the steady blaze ;
And in the updrawn, cosy chair,
A young man sits with steadfast gaze.

And at his side his daughter stands,—
To him the queen of blue-eyed girls,—
And in the firelight spreads her hands,
And brushes back her yellow curls.
His arm around her waist is clasped,
This blooming girl of summers three,
While with the other, firmly grasped,
A babe is dandled on his knee.

The morrow is the birth of Christ ;
The day that in The Builder's plan
There came the Lamb which, sacrificed,
Was purchase-price for fallen man.
When deeper love of home upsprings,
And closer bond around it draws ;
Sweet time that unto children brings
The pleasant myth of Santa Claus.

Ah well, dear wife, this Christmas-tide,
It finds me with an empty purse.
I am not sad ; my time I bide,
And hope it will not turn to worse.
But for some things I'm ill at ease,—
I think you see my meaning's drift,
Because you smile,—the chief of these
I have for you no Christmas gift.

Sure I no instance should forget
To make some form of outward sign,
To show that I am in your debt,
While you, my love, are yet in mine.
But we'll not make our loves a book
To strike a balance of accounts ;
But pay, and pay, and never look
To adding up the vast amounts.

For what can I display to mate
The patience and the help you lent,
When hand in hand in life's estate
We from our small beginning went ?
And though I had the Ophir gold,—
Such as I know shall never be,—

It could not match, its sum all told,
That Christmas gift you gave to me.

Dear girl ! I see two watery nets
Weave in my eyelids as I speak,—
A mistiness that Love begets
I own, although it may be weak.
Love for her mischief, frolic-bred,
Her childish sayings quaint and wise,
As if there were shut in her head
Some old soul looking through her eyes.

I find there is no sweeter thing
Than when the day has gone to rest,
Lulled by such songs as I can sing,
She sinks to slumber on my breast ;
Or, when the morn has but begun,
To feel her arms about me reach,
And find such worlds of mirth and fun
In blunders of her infant speech.

And as the years rolled on apace
This fellow came, with eyes like mine,
And dimples in his merry face.
He almost was a Valentine.
The jolly scamp ! To see the way
He for some passing notice begs,
And see how, brimming full of play,
He kicks his chubby little legs !

Dear tokens of our weddinghood !
We did not for such good allow

As ours has been. We hoped that good
Would come, but did not presage how,
We were so ill-equipped, indeed.

And slow I think had been our pace
But for the good friend in our need
Who helped me with a paying place.

The question something odd provokes :

If you recall the eve we walked
Down in the grove of rustling oaks,
And of the far-seen Future talked.
And from the brook with grassy bank
(A wandering fancy makes me ask)
I stooped upon my hands and drank?
You thought the act was "picturesque."

We in the Future looked. The breeze
Made summer sighings overhead ;
While underneath, among the trees,
Was wealth of summer beauty spread.
We wished our mingled paths might stray
In just such glories of the woods.
'Twas long before that autumn day
You fuchsias wore for orange buds.

And we began the battle then,
And bravely have we fought along.
It has not always springlike been,
For sun and shade to life belong.
But ours has been a pleasant life,
And on this night, of all the year,
I fain recall your goodness, wife,
And tell the charms that greet me here.

I could not bear to have you rise
Upon to-morrow's merry morn,
And in that time of sweet surprise
To find no present for your own.
So I must tell you in advance,
This one regret the time alloys.
'Tis only left our hearts to dance
To see the children with their toys.

We'll deck the house with box and yew,
With mistletoe and leaves of green ;
The cedar, with its dots of blue,
And holly-berries strewn between.
We'll enter full the Christmas cheer,
And keep awatch for future thrift,
And trust that I another year
May make you, love, some Christmas gift.
1877.

THE DEPARTED YEAR.

OLD year ! old year ! that liest here
So cold and stark upon thy bier,
I fold thy hands upon thy breast,
And pray for thee unbroken rest !

Gone, gone !—yea, gone ! Thy breath withdrawn !
Yet ere the rising of the dawn,
Like fickle courtiers, do we sing,
“ The king is dead ! Long live the king ! ”

Away, away ! In confined clay
Such feeble source of strength doth lay,
We turn from those whose lips are dumb
To worship who succeeding come.

1878.

WINTER-GLIMPSES.

THE SNOW-CLOUD.

A DULL light glimmers in the sky.
A misty vastness I descry,
With objects seen but dimly.

I look aloft, and in the gray
The eye-sight faints and fades away,
In snow-flakes softly falling.

Now slant across the field they chase ;
In whirling lines they interlace,
Like bars of airy lattice.

A spirit in the winter cloud
Spreads on the frozen ground a shroud,
And wraps the hills in ermine.

See how yon supple holly stands,
With snow-wreaths gathered in his hands,
Begemmed with scarlet berries.

How to yon high magnolia cleaves
The snow-growth, lying in its leaves
And bending down the branches.

The cone-shaped cedar leans sidewise,
With cribbled drift that in it lies
Its swinging tresses powdered.

The branches of the naked peach
Are clad in feathered cloaks ; and each
The shrubs are bunched and muffled.

I see a traveller on his way.
His hair and beard are tinged with gray ;
His shoulders wear a tippet.

I hear the crushing of the snow ;
I see the breath his nostrils blow
Rise up in wreaths of vapor.

What wonder is this coming down,—
This glory of a kingly crown
Descending out of heaven ?

What miracle of work is here !
Beyond the craft of sage or seer,
The cunning of magician

The texture of this downy robe ;
This dazzling cloak that folds the globe ;
This vestment of the winter !

What splints of glass and crystals fine !
What prisms when the light doth shine
Upon this swimming whiteness !

What diamond-dust of rarest hue,
What stars and spangles, leap to view
Beneath the gaze of lenses !

Nor made alone for beauty thus,
But beauty hand in hand with use,
The blinding dearth is given.

For first the quickened thing must die,
And locked in frigid slumber lie,
Renewed for further living.

Oh, the far thought of that All-might
That clothes the fields in shining white,
And makes the cold intenser,

That Earth may for a season sleep,
And freshened stores of vigor keep
To meet the needs of summer !

THE SLEET.

Abroad the winter rules complete.
A rain has fallen filled with sleet.
The snow is hard encrusted.

The sun looks down with waning face
Upon a slippery sea of glace ;
His sway below disputed.

His light, devoid of fervor, lies
In tree-boughs lit with rainbow dyes,
And rimmed with burnished silver.

The roof a smoother coat receives,
And sprouting at the leaky eaves,
Grows blades of shining poignards.

Each stalk of weed, or withered grass,
Stands stiffened in a thick cuirass ;
A warrior clad for battle.

The slender branches, ice-encased,
Rise up with brittle jewels graced ;
Each twig with frozen opals.

The brooklet bears a pavement laid
Like Solomon, imitating, made
For Balkîs, Queen of Sheba.⁴

What elfin land-view meets my gaze !
At every turn its splendors blaze
Upon the lingering vision.

Oh, land excelling fairy dreams
Of flashing gems, seen in the beams
Of lamp of old Aladdin !

What coffers furnish this largess ?
The gift of what great king is this,
So lavish of his riches ?

They flash, they glitter, everywhere !
They fill with light the crisping air,
Like Northern Borealis.

I grieve not that the winter reigns,
And frost-ferns on the window-panes
Are stamped by hidden fingers.

I take it as His wise command,
Who, in the hollow of His hand,
Protects the falling sparrow.

Though I may not the good perceive,
Yet, from afar, I well believe
He works a distant purpose,

And that this purpose is not lost
When skies perform the work of frost,
But shines a steady beacon.

There is no phase of seeming ill,
But moving through its anguish still,
He yields the good fore-ordered.

O-NI-HAH-KET.

FAR across the bowl of blue
Shuddering bursts of silver flew,
Streaming past the clouds of lead
Heaped in piling mass o'erhead.
Down the rugged mountain side
Roared the blast, a rushing tide,
Riving in its windy glee
Tinted wealth of branch and tree.
And the thunder's husky roar
Deepened, swelling more and more,
Till from out the misty main
Dashed the swift-descending rain ;
Falling, in unbroken flow,
On the dripping world below.

On a boulder wild and high,
Outlined on the darkening sky,
Tall an Indian hunter stood.
Ranging was he through the wood.
Wearied in the lengthened chase,
Hither had he sought a place
Where, perchance from station high,
Might he trace of game espy ;
Or beneath the layered steep
Into friendly shelter creep,
Where to wait th' impending rain,
And pursue the hunt again.

Girt he was with belt of beads,
Clasping arms for sudden needs.
In his hands a long bow bent,
Which the singing arrow sent.
In his head-band streamed a feather,
And a suit of buckskin leather
Clad him as the hunters dress
In the lonely wilderness.

All day had he sought for game.
Nothing in his range there came.
Not a red deer came in sight ;
Not a hare to left or right ;
Not a squirrel in the trees ;
Not a pheasant on the breeze.
Though these last he might despise,
In a search for higher prize,
Yet from hunger's cause I trow
Gladly would he meet them now.
Hunger not alone of his.
Far away his wigwam is.
There, at morn, his Indian wife,
Sharer of his hunter life,
Left he for the tangled brake,
Where the deer their covert make.

As the storm drew on apace,
From his lofty watching-place
Slid he down ; intent to wait
Till its fury should abate.
First the bow-string did he slack,
Slung the pouch across his back.

Down the craggy points he stepped,
'Neath a jutting ledge he crept,
Where he lay secure and dry
While the tempest raved on high.

Now the thunder's wrath is sped,
But the day is almost dead.
As the rain-clouds break away
Light around their edges play.
In the rosy-margined west
Dips the sun his flaming crest.
No more time to speed the chase,
He will seek his camping-place.
On with nimble feet he flew,
But when near the spot he drew
Nothing saw he of his tent,
Though with searching gaze he bent.
Had the wind thrown down the poles?
Blown away the tent-skin folds?
She who, in the morning bright,
He had left with spirit light,
Why did she not run to meet him,
And with ready welcome greet him?
On he pressed with active bound.
Drawing to the spot, he found
Tent and lodge-poles overthrown,
Wife and wigwam missing—gone!

Gone! But where? He looked around,
Searched for footprints on the ground,
Looked for traces, but in vain;
All had perished in the rain.

Scanned the lodge-poles: one was broken.
Of what thing was this a token?
More he searched, and then he stopped,
On his hands and knees he dropped.
In the failing light at length
Found what put to flight his strength,
Made him weak as is a dwarf,—
Tattered fragments of a scarf.

These belonged, he well did know,
To no roving Indian foe.
Only they of faces white
Went in such fine garb bedight:
They whose hated tread had come
Thundering o'er the Indian's home.
Tattered were they; rent and torn,
As by some marauder worn,
Grappled in his rude essay,
Portions had been torn away.
And the snapped and broken pole
Spoke a crafty foot that stole
On the wigwam he had left,
And by force had wrought a theft.
Theft of tent-walls; plaited mat;
Robe of bison; skin of cat;
Belt, and pipe, and hunting-knife;
More than all, the theft of wife.
In his mind he, with a glance,
Saw the deed as in a trance,
And, with lightning in his eye,
Read her maddening destiny.

Turning, rushed he to the river,
Drew an arrow from his quiver,

Sent it on its whizzing flight,
Upwards in the fields of night.
Ere it, falling, reached the tide,
Wailing, he in anguish cried :
“ Spirit of the earth and air,
Hark to O-ni-hah-ket’s prayer !
Make me strong, and make me tough,
Give my sinews strength enough,
That I neither fail nor sleep
While I watch untiring keep
For this stealthy coward hound
Who hath dashed me to the ground !
Let me track his dastard feet !
Let me know him when we meet !
Give to me to see him bleed !
Give me vengeance for the deed !”

Forward in the dark he ran,
And his sorrowing search began.

Flush of sunset, red and gold,
Tips the hills and paints the wold,
And the last receding ray,
Lingering o’er the grave of day,
Falls upon an armed command,
Part of Ponce de Leon’s band :
He who sailed from ancient Spain,
Drawn with hope of power and gain,
Tending in an aimless quest
To the New World in the west.
Touching at the sloping coast,
He, with all his daring host,

Landed from the lapping bay
On a certain Easter-day.
So 'tis called in tongue of ours ;
Spaniards call it "Feast of Flowers."
In the churchly calendar,
"Pasqua de la Florida."
So the land was called, and yet
Bears the name upon it set.

Westward, a determined few
Pushed into the region new,
Trusting they should soon behold
Rocks that yield the yellow gold.
Westward pushed they day by day ;
Westward still the ore-land lay ;
Westward, till they reached a stream,
Broad and wide its windings seem ;
River that the Indians know,
By the name of "Smoky Bow."

Wearied with their lengthened tramp,
On its banks they pitched their camp,
There to rest in sleep profound,
And the morrow push beyond.

Swart of face and big of bone,
Stood they where the fire-light shone,
Lighting spears and coats of mail,
Greaves of steel and skirts of scale.
Sword and musket, lance and plume,
In the flickering picture loom,
As around the camp-fire drew
This determined, rugged few.

From the circle stepping out,
One hallooed with lusty shout :
Listened as to catch reply
In some distant, answering cry.
Hearing none, again he cried ;
But no answering shout replied.

In the wood, not far away,
There a crouching Indian lay,
Peering through the walls of night
At the group around the light.
Long he looked, then slowly rose,
As averse a tiger goes
From the idly wandering thing
In the circuit of his spring.
Noiselessly he moved a while,
Up the river half a mile
Went, and slid into the tide,
And swam to the other side.
By a rock he found a place,
Lying prone upon his face
With the camp-fire well in sight,
Shining with its twinkling light.
As he lay upon the ground,
Oft and o'er he caught the sound
Of that far-resounding shout,
In the night-winds borne about.
Once he thought his wakeful ear
Caught a distant answering cheer ;
Then a halloo, loud and shrill.
After that the camp was still.

Mists of morning, cold and gray,
Dim the rising light of day.

But the camp is all arrayed
For the journey to be made.
Down unto the river-side
Did four hardy soldiers stride,
Bearing two small birch canoes,
Such as those the Indians use ;
Launched them in the bubbling tide,
And made for the other side.

Thrice the boats have ferried o'er :
Thrice have sought the former shore.
All across the stream have gone
But a wretched captive one,
And her captor, stern and hard,
Standing near her as a guard.

Waiting now the shallops heave,
And he motions her to leave.
To the first boat does he haste,
In the other she is placed.
Then they thrust into the stream,
And the paddles dip and gleam.

Now the first boat grates the sands,
And upon the bank he stands.
Twined around his neck there lies
A bright scarf of mingled dyes.

By the rock the Indian hid
From his waiting ambush slid ;
Trembling with a mighty shiver,
Drew an arrow from his quiver,

Fitted it upon the string,
And his best aim summoning,
Drew it backward full its length,
Shot it with his utmost strength
At the wearer of the tie,
Soft with many a mingled dye.
And the keen barb deep impressed
Where the throat joins to the breast,
Piercing in its swerveless flight
Through the scarf of colors bright.

As the Spaniard downward fell
From the savage burst a yell ;
Loud exulting : while in air
Tossed his right arm, brown and bare.

Startled by his sudden fall,
Grouped in rank, his comrades all
Stand arrayed, and wait the foe
Who has dealt the deadly blow.
Only they one figure see,
Standing bold and fearlessly.
At the target offered thus
Each one aims his blunderbuss.

But the figure does not move,
Smites his breast his will to prove,
And exclaims, with flashing eye,
“ O-ni-hah-ket scorns to fly ! ”

Bellow loud the thunders then ;
Speed the lightning bolts of men ;

And the Indian, with a bound,
Lifeless sinks upon the ground,
On his face revenge expressed ;
Twenty bullets in his breast.

Hardly hill and valley caught
Echoes of the loud report,
When there burst a fearful shriek,
Shrill as from an eagle's beak,
Rising from the other boat,
In the river yet afloat.
And the captive from its side
Leaped into the sweeping tide.
Act to stop her was in vain ;
Sank she and ne'er rose again.

Centuries and more have gone
Since these bloody deeds were done.
Where the Indian hunter died,
Lo ! a city sits in pride :
City that its name obtains
From the rock, that still remains,
First rock from the river's mouth
As you journey from the south,
And behind whose ragged shelf
O-ni-hah-ket hid himself.

Busy mart and crowded street,
Loaded wain, and hurrying feet,
Towering houses, stone and brick,
Store and factory, huddled thick,
These the traveller meets to-day,
Where of old these mishaps lay.

And of all the busy throng,
As they rush and push along,
None of all the people know
O-ni-hah-ket sleeps below.

1878.

THE DROUGHT.

DRY, dry, the grasses lie, crisping in the sun.
Red, red, the sky o'erhead flames when day is done.
Days, days, the burning rays bake the cracking ground.
Breeze, breeze, in rustling trees, ye were a welcome
sound !

Far, far, the heavens are : naked is the sky.
Thin, thin, the grigs begin to pipe a thirsty cry.
Limp, limp, the corn-leaves crimp, wilting ear and
blade.
Low, low, the cattle blow, sweltering in the shade.

Down, down, the sun's disk round drops, but glowing
still.
Long, long shadows throng, creeping down the hill.
Soon, soon, the argent moon shall her arc disclose ;
Then, then, to languid men, comes a glad repose.

THE SUMMER RAIN.

CLOUDS, clouds, lowering clouds, in the western sky !
Clouds, clouds, towering clouds, piled up mountain
high !

See, see, the lightning free trickles in a stream !
Bright, bright, the heavens light, and glow in silver
gleam !

There, there, high in air, the swift-shot merlin flies,
Skims, skims, flitting swims, ere the winds arise.
Now, now, the mountain brow with bounding echoes
ring.
Deep, deep, the thunders keep a sullen muttering.

Dull, dull, the clouds are full of vapor and of rain.
Flash, flash, the thunder's crash rumbles o'er the plain.
Fast, fast, the roaring blast drives the herdsmen home.
Here, here, swift and clear, the pattering rain-drops
come !

THE RICHEST PRINCE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF JUSTIN KERNER.

BOASTING of their kingdoms' riches,
And their wealth in glowing terms,
Sat a group of German princes
In the Kaiser's Hall at Wörms.

“Lordly,” said the Saxon ruler,
“Is my kingdom and its might.
Silver yield its rugged mountains,
Dug from mines as dark as night.”

“Sits my land in splendid plenty,”
Said the Elector from the Rhine.
“Golden grain within the valleys ;
On the mountains noble wine.”

“Crowded cities, wealthy cloisters,”
Louis of Bavaria claimed,
“Make my land a state as worthy
As the best that you have named.”

Everard, the flowing-bearded,
Württemberg’s beloved lord,
Said, “My land has only hamlets ;
Does no silver-mine afford.

“But its *people* are such treasures,
That in forests wild and dread,
In the lap of humblest subjects
I can safely lay my head.”

Then upspoke the Saxon ruler,
Louis, and the one from Rhine :
“Bearded Count, you are the richest !
All our claims must yield to thine.”

THE COUNSELLOR'S TALE.

A LAWYER sat beside his office fire,
Toward the dying of a winter day ;
A dark dull day of mingled clouds and rain.
His hair had caught the floating mist of years ;
His face the marks of never-idle Time.
And round the room were rows of dusty books,
And countless piles of papers : open desks,
With bulging letters in the pigeon-holes,—
The scattered chips struck from his daily work :
The life-long task of slow-revolving years.
And near him, elbow-deep in papers, sat
A younger man, a tyro in the art.
The elder laid aside his heavy tome,
And gazed awhile intently at the flame.
Then, rousing from his reverie, he said :
“ My son ! I would that you should find a way
To lead your feet to name and to renown
In goodly time. I would you clasped the hand
Of high ambition ; yet so held your course
In close adhesion to the strictest right
Report should rather find you than you her.

“ And be not over-hasty after Fame.
Be patient, work and wait, and it will come.
For either they who force its native growth,
From having made it flower over-soon
Do sooner fall to withered leaves ; or else,
To lash its coming into quicker speed,

Use questionable means : nor keep in sight
The finer sense that parts the right and wrong,
The thing forbid and thing permissible.

“I mind me well of Malcomb Bayner. Young,
Ambitious, ardent, capable ; too hot
To wait the slow coming of a clientage,
And eager, by some sudden stroke, to stand
Full in the front of action and of men.
And ere long the wished-for moment came.
A criminal stood on trial in the court
For the offence of shedding human blood.
The commonwealth’s attorney, tall and strong,
With sympathy for tyros in the ranks,
And more to give the means of prominence
Than for the aid an embryo could yield,
Requested him to join the people’s cause,
And fall in with the prosecution, as
Assistant counsel in the State’s behalf.
And Malcomb, listening to Ambition’s voice,
And seeing here the start from which, ere long,
He hoped to reach the goal,—without the thought
The thing was asked in kindness, not in need,—
A moment paused, but rendered his assent,
And entered as a counsel for the State.

“Aye, sure if ever culprit did deserve
A prosecution earnest, this one did.
For on a hot and breathless August day,
When the sun blazed fiercely overhead,
And parched and cracked the arid plains,
He came upon the outskirts of the town,
To where a woman kept a little store,

And made a trifling purchase. She, to give
The necessary change, displayed a box
Before the covetous visage of the man,—
A common box of pasteboard, colored blue,
Wherein was kept the earnings of the store,—
And raking in its contents, found the pence,
And gave them him, and slowly he withdrew.
At nightfall, when the evening lamps were lit,
He came again, with cunning worded tale:
Her husband, working in a distant field,
Had fallen down of sunstroke. Being now
Somewhat restored, had sent for her to come,
And bring with her the box, for fear of theft.

“She, without thought to analyze the tale,
Or question of its probabilities,
Hearing only in her woman’s heart
The cry of him she loved, in haste
Prepared herself, and gathered up the box,
And called unto her daughter, ‘Come, my child!
Your father needs us! Come, and go with me!’
Then something whispered in her heart,—the voice
Of God or angel, knowing all before.
And so she paused: ‘I will not take the child.’
And then the man urged, ‘Better take the child.’
But ‘No,’ she said, ‘I will not take her now.
But there, a fellow-workman, whom I know,
Will come and bring her. I am ready. Come.’
Again the man urged: ‘Better take the child.’

“Then forth she hurried in the starlit night.
And when half-way, amid a lonely waste,
The fiend upraised a hatchet, dealt a blow

That crushed her skull, and felled her to the earth.
And in the struggle wrenching from her grasp
The cursed lucre, price of human blood,
He left her dead, with features fixed and white
Upturned to the silent sky, and fled.

“When morning crept up o’er the hills of gray,
The husband, having rested overnight,
As was his wont when darkness drawing on
Had found him with his task unfilled, set out
To join the family at the morning meal.
And by the roadside, lying cold and white,
He found her, with her face toward the sky,
And Death’s dread presence glaring in her gaze.

“And then a cry was raised, and far and wide
Came numbers flocking where the woman lay;
And lips, and tongues, and voices bore about
The horrid news of murder. Then the child
Was found, and told the tale of how the man
Had come; and what he said; and how with him
Her mother went, and leaving her behind.
And did she know him? Yes. One Sandford Pratt.
(A man of ill repute and evil deeds,
Who once had been a laborer awhile
In the same field where now the husband wrought,
And often was about the store, and hence
The woman easier heeded what he said.)

“Forthwith were patrols sent for his arrest.
He was not found. The women of his house
Could only say he left the house at dawn.
And where was he the night before? At home.

From what hour? Ten. And when would he return?
They knew not, or if knowing, would not tell.
And all the day they searched for him in vain,
Till late was found one saying, Hours ago
San Pratt had bargained of him for a horse.
The bargain closed, it was arranged that he
Should come at candle-light and take the horse.
It wanted then some hour or more to dusk,
And near the house were hidden, secretly,
Two men to watch who came and went therein.
And darkness fell; and then a noise was heard
As one would enter at the door. And forth
The patrols rushed, and seized and bound him there,
The man himself. And then the house was searched,
And hidden in the centre of his bed
They found a roll of bills. And were they his?
Yes! Whence had he them? And silent he.

“And these the husband searching, one by one,
Picked from the lot a certain tattered note,
Torn in peculiar way: a swallow-fork
Upon an upper corner. This he knew
For one he gave his wife the day before.
Then forward came two neighbors. They had been
About the store at later in the night,
And there the child had, weeping, told them all,
And that she feared to stay alone: so they
Assisted her to close the store, and one
Led her away to where his children were,
To pass the night. And as they closed the door
A man was seen to vanish in the bush:
The fading outline of a stooping form.
Unrecognized he was, seen not in face,

Nor full in figure as he disappeared.
They, thinking nothing of it, led her home.

“Then also came the owner of the horse.
The day before the deed he urged San Pratt
To buy the beast. But he, with sturdy plea
Of indigence and standing not in need
Of such a thing as that, forbore to buy.
But yesterday he came again and said
His mind was changed ; he wanted now the horse ;
But nothing of his source of means to buy.
And then a court was held ; and there the child
Was brought and questioned face to face with him.
Again she told the tale as told before,
And knew the prisoner as the self-same man
Who left the store, with whom her mother went.
So he was held to answer to the charge
Of bloody murder, by the outraged law.

“A year elapsed before his trial came ;
A year and more that justice poised her sword.
By frequent hitchings in the great machine
That constitutes the conduct of the courts,
By absent witnesses, and long delays,
A twelvemonth fled : and then a half was gone.
The child had seen him never in that time.
And now the court-hall, crowded to the full,
Beheld him on his trial for the deed ;
And she stood there, his life within her hand.
And they who stood upon the man’s defence,
Grave counsel, interposed because her youth
Was such—she being but the age of nine—
She knew not of the nature of an oath :

And fortified them with a show of law.
As where the quirk but that some sentence, writ
With no allusion, can be made to stand
In goodly showing for the thing desired?
But to her said the judge : ‘ Now tell me, child,
What would befall you if you told a lie ?’
The child, abashed one instant, raised her eyes,
And meekly answered, ‘ God would punish me !’
‘ A goodly answer !’ quoth he. ‘ Let her speak.’
And lo ! the man’s last hold on life had slipped !
And then the prosecutors questioned her :
‘ Now look around about you in the crowd,
And point to us the man who left the store,
Attended by your mother, on that night.’

“ There was no cause to mark him from the rest :
No gyves nor manacles, nor sat he lone,
For in the press the eager, listening throng,
Had crowded close to where the culprit sat,
And thus was foiled the easy knowing him.

“ Upright she stood amid the crowd of men,
A slight, frail child, with yellow flowing hair,
And meek, mild eyes, the tenderest haze of blue.
And as those eyes passed over face by face,
Or lingered with attentive scrutiny,
A breathless, painful pause hung on the throng.
And on they slipped from face to face until
They rested on the prisoner ; and then,
Her arm upraised and pointing to the man
Her tiny finger, said, ‘ There ! That is he !’

“ Oh, mighty, mighty Truth, that dost ordain
Thy strength to lie within the mouths of babes :

That mad'st this fragile child become a force
To crush to atoms yonder trembling soul :
Her tiny finger, like a bludgeon great,
To beat unto the earth the bloody fiend,
And trample down his head into the dust,
Laid prostrate for his sin to God and man !

“ And all these things did Malcomb turn to use,
And, growing earnest in his oratory,
He wove them in a web of telling speech.
Why was the man so urgent in his talk
The child should go ? Why ? but that, at a blow,
He too might hurl her to the grave, and leave
No tongue to tell the doer of the deed !
And who was he that vanished in the bush,
Seen by the neighbors shutting up the store ?
Aye, who but he returned to do the deed,
Since that his plan had compassed only half :
Returned to sap her infant life, and seal
In frigid Death the lips that, could they ope,
Would hurl him into dungeons and to death !
But God, who moved against the villain's deed,
Had brought confusion on his studied plan,
And snatched her safely from his vile intent ;
And kept her, as an instrument, to wreak
An earthly punishment upon his head.
And whence the sudden wealth, and unexplained ?
With plenty now, a beggar yesterday.
And why the change in needing of the beast ?
But that, when finding every passage closed ;
Detection sure ; the deed but badly done ;
There naught remained but he should get the horse,
And, under cover of the night, escape.

“ ‘Escape?’ cried Malcomb, rising with his theme ;
‘Escape? Go where? What corner of the earth
Affords a cover for this bloody deed?
Where can the doer of it find a place
To hide it from himself and from the world?
He cannot hide it under polar snows !
He cannot hide it in the desert sands !
The balm of sleep shall not enwrap his sense
But starting, quaking, from its drowsy folds
His voice will stammer out, “I did the deed !”
His restless eye shall catch a flitting form
In every motion of the swaying wood !
The shadows of the waving trees will fright
His troubled soul, and, from the hedgerows, start
Unnumbered captors, clutching at his skirts !
The myriad things of nature—reed, and weed,
And root, and blade of grass—will find a tongue,
And lift a finger pointing unto him !
The falling of a leaf will smite his ears
With thunder shocks : and every blast of wind
That howls aloud will wail out, “Murder !” ’

“The peroration done, a murmured sound
Of ill-suppressed applause ran through the crowd ;
Attesting of the feeling, deep and strong,
That moved them, and could scarcely be restrained
Even by the majesty of courts.

“Aye, thus did Malcomb for his maiden speech.
And Fame made busy with her high report,
And trumpeted his name as full of praise.
Yet often have I thought : And was this well ?
Had not the law its officers ; and they

Complete and able to see justice done ?
Was not the State's attorney tall and strong
In brain and frame, and with the largest gift
Of eloquence to sway the listening throng
And fill the watching eyes with sudden tears ?
And could not he have seen the right upborne ?
For never have I heard a stronger storm
Than that he broke above that culprit head,—
A thunder-gust of eloquence and truth,—
As with his deep and far-resounding voice
He knit the mesh of pointed testimony.

“ And ever to my mind, in vacant hours,
There comes a picture of the felon face,
With deep-drawn breath and starting beads of sweat,
The same as when, within that echoing hall,
He heard the chain drawn round him, link by link,
With no link missing. For the man was held
As guilty by the verdict of his peers ;
And, ere long, in onward course of time,
Was gibbeted against an April sky.”

1878.

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE I, PAGE 71.

The Wrangler.

This poem was written after hearing lectures delivered in Little Rock by Prof. J. W. Clarke, a learned Englishman, at the time professor in a Chicago college, upon the "Antiquity of Man," and kindred scientific subjects. It touches upon two topics,—the Unity of the Human Race, and the Origin of the Species.

In the first topic certain difficulties in conceiving that all men sprang from a common stock are suggested; and there are difficulties connected with the subject so great as to have led writers of high authority into the belief that there were several original pairs, at least more than one, for the propagation of the great human family; that Adam was the progenitor of the white race only; and that the negro is descended from neither of the sons of Noah, but that he is pre-Adamite in his origin.

The entry of Cain into the land of Nod, and his building there a city, is often adverted to as indicating the existence of other stocks of men than the Adamite pair. The building of a city is a matter not certainly to be performed by an unaided man, the very mention of which is suggestive of the employment of many hundreds of men. And if built by himself and his immediate descendants, unaided by alien or stranger help, whence had he descendants? Who was his wife, and where did he obtain her? Did he procure her in the land of Nod, or did he bring her with him from Eden?

If the chronology of events is to be derived from the order in which they are stated in Genesis, he could not have taken her with him, for, at the time of his departure, no other children are mentioned as having been born to Adam and Eve but the two, Cain and Abel. The birth of the next child succeeding the two is not recorded to have been until

after the killing of Abel; for of this child (Seth) Eve said, "God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." Thus showing that at the time of Cain's departure there was no one he could have taken with him for a wife.

And if he returned to the land of his parents, and took unto himself one of those daughters of Adam born during the eight hundred years that Adam lived after the birth of Seth, we do not learn it from the book of Genesis.

These things have induced the belief that when Cain went into the land of Nod he encountered a pre-Adamite negro race, and amalgamated with them.

Now to account for the existence of the black man on the globe to-day, since we know he did not enter into and come out of the ark, it is proposed that the flood was only partial in its extent, and did not embrace his race.

This is certainly against the common belief, for the idea has obtained in the mind of the world, derived both from revelation and science, that that disaster was universal in its sweep upon what was the world in that day. It is mentioned by the Duke of Argyle, in his "Primeval Man," p. 92, that the wide belief in the existence of a flood among heathen nations, and "tribes now separated by half the circumference of the globe," is an indication of the unity of the human race, the knowledge thereof being considered as having been handed down by descent from a surviving few.

But may this fact not furnish conclusions to other purposes, to wit: Might not the flood and the destruction of races have been but partial, and these widely-scattered tribes have learned of it by intercommunication with the survivors? If intercommunication be not possible, might there not have been others than those in the ark saved from the flood, supposing it to have been universal, whereby the knowledge of it is self-derived?

For if neither of these be true, then the same difficulty exists in conceiving the black race to have sprung from descendants of the white man Noah that there was in the first instance in conceiving him to have sprung from the white man Adam.

The differences between these two most widely-divergent types are so great in color, in the coloring matter of the skin, in hair, and in the structure of the frame, as to lead physiologists to the belief that they are referable to distinct and independent creations of man, and not to any divergence, by the effects of climate or other cause, from an original common type of mankind.

Upon the second topic of the poem, I am free to confess that I do not consider a development theory, or theory of gradual growth, which acknowledges God as the starting point, to be improbable. There is nothing atheistic in such a belief. For, as remarked by Dr. Chadbourne in his work on Natural Theology (Lect. vi.), it makes little difference in our faith whether we believe God to have made Adam all at once a full-grown man, or whether He made him first an atom or germ which should in time grow into a man. In either case He is the Maker, and it is just as great a manifestation of His power to say that He made such a germ, endowed with such a capacity, as it would be to say that He made a full-grown and complete man in an instant of time. It is just as great a miracle of wisdom and power that He makes an acorn, that in time shall develop into an oak, as it would be if He made a full-grown tree in the twinkling of an eye.—*Chadbourne's Nat. Theol.*, p. 173.

NOTE 2, PAGE 75.

*"It filled the sketch that God began,
As found in time Silurian."*

"The pectoral fin of the first fish in the Silurian seas, in the dim geologic ages, was the first sketch of the hand of man that Nature introduced upon the globe. And from that simple sketch she never varied; but the plan became more definite and perfect, and higher in its use as higher animals were introduced, till an organ was produced that is a fit servant of the intelligence with which man is endowed."—*Chadbourne's Nat. Theol.*, p. 112.

NOTE 3, PAGE 84.

Mountain Meadows.

On the 23d day of March, 1877, John D. Lee, a Mormon leader, suffered the penalty of death for having instigated and participated in the massacre of a party of emigrants from Arkansas and Missouri, at Mountain Meadows, in Southern Kansas, in the year 1857. As the law of Kansas allows a criminal to choose between hanging and shooting for the manner of his execution, Lee chose the latter, and

was accordingly led out to the spot where the massacre occurred, and there, seated on his coffin, was shot to death by a volley from a platoon of guards.

NOTE 4, PAGE 102.

*"Like Solomon, imitating, made
For Balkis, Queen of Sheba."*

The allusion here is to that passage of the Koran wherein is described the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. He, desiring to impress her with a sense of his wisdom and magnificence, had erected a gorgeous throne at the end of the court before the palace, which court he had caused to be floored with clear glass, laid over running water in which fish were swimming. When Balkis—for by this name was she known among the Arabs—came to it, she imagined it to be a great water, and made as if she would wade through. Whereupon Solomon said to her, "Verily this is a palace evenly floored with glass."—p. 312.

The action of the cold in spreading over the water a sheet transparent and clear like glass is the analogy employed.

THE END.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 597 608 7